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PUSHKIN: 1799-1837

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"He is the King James Version of the Russian language" . . .

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Russia's First Realist

BY MANYA GORDON

MANY readers of *The Saturday Review*, not excepting those who know their Russian novelists, must be puzzled by the elaborate preparations in this country in connection with the centenary of the to us practically unknown Russian poet Pushkin. To say that England and France are similarly engaged and that Russia is literally ablaze with a Pushkin revival will not in itself make the situation here any more intelligible.

The source of our enthusiasm is undoubtedly Russia. There the centennial preparations are colossal. The youth of Russia is in a fever of enthusiasm and Pushkin's portrait is displayed with Stalin's. Every human effort is being made to honor the memory of the great poet. It is, however, wrong to assume, as some do, that the Pushkin celebration in Russia is largely a gesture on the part of the Soviet Government, an effort to show the bourgeois world how the communists can honor their literary giants. The recent anniversaries of Turgeniev, Tolstoy, and Dostoievsky did not arouse anywhere near the same nation-wide attention or enthusiasm.

Pushkin is so honored because of his inherent national and folk character and his manifold genius. He is Russia's supreme poet, if not her greatest literary figure. He is, likewise, her first full grown realist. He is the King James Version of the Russian language. He is, finally, the creator of Tatiana. The heroine of his novel in verse, "Eugene Onegin," is the prototype of the high-minded, much admired Russian woman in actual life and literature.

The puckish humor in which one feels his own delightful musical laughter, and his biting satire endeared him to every kind of reader. Pushkin rescued Russian literature from the grip of classicism and made it a folk art. Incidentally, he made of poetry a profitable and highly respected profession. He was paid twenty-five gold roubles a line and in 1836 one editor complained that Pushkin asked fifteen thousand roubles for three short poems covering three printed pages, a sum that would make our own poets dizzy.

It is difficult to recall a literary man anywhere who compares with Pushkin in versatility. He is master both of prose and verse. He is equally supreme in nursery tales, light verse, historical tragedy ("Boris Godunov"), the novel, ("Eugene Onegin"), romantic drama (the unfinished "Mermaid"). His uncompleted history of the Pugachov peasant revolt of the eighteenth century reveals him as a great historian. Add to this his inspired simplicity and you will have the secret of his popularity. His audience begins with the children in the nursery. It takes in the village, and it includes the fastidious, the sophisticated, and the learned. In other words, he is read by everybody. Fifty years after his death, at the expiration of the copyrights, popular editions of his writings in ten volumes were sold by the hundreds of thousands at the incredible price of seventy-five cents a set. Single volumes of his poems were sold by the millions. Little wonder that Russians have been saying for a century, "Pushkin is our All."

PUSHKIN AT MIKHAILOVSKOE

Pictures on cover, page 3, and page 4 from "Pushkin" by Ernest J. Simmons.

Alexander Pushkin was born in Moscow June 6, 1799 of a noble family. His paternal ancestry dates back to the twelfth century. The mother was a granddaughter of Ganebal, an Ethiopian prince whom Peter I bought for two glasses of beer. The elder Pushkins were more interested in society than in their children, and according to the prevailing mode, spoke French with them instead of Russian. The little Alexander was disliked by his mother, and to escape criticism and punishment he sought refuge with his nurse whom he loved all his life. Her influence cannot be overstated. She inspired in him a love for folklore and the simple Russian language.

Fame came to Pushkin at an early age when he was still a student at the famous Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum. In 1815 the poet Derzhavin heard him read his "Reminiscences in Tsarskoe Selo" and exclaimed "I shall not die," implying that he would live in Pushkin. Later he told the writer Aksakov, "Here is one who will succeed me." About the same time the poet Zhukovsky inscribed on a photograph which he gave the young genius, "To a pupil from his outdistanced teacher." The publication of "Ruslan and Ludmila" in 1820 carried Pushkin's name to every corner of the Russian empire.

The magic quality of this fascinating fairy tale is conveyed in the first few lines of the prologue.

> A green oak stands on the shore and an educated cat, attached to it by a golden chain, goes round the oak night and day, singing songs when it goes to the left, and telling tales when it goes to the right.

The struggle of Ruslan and Ludmila with the Black Sea Sorcerer is told in verse of enchanting beauty, but so simple in word and phrase that all Russia soon knew pages of it by heart. This tale which the learned cat told Pushkin had an epoch-making effect upon Russian

Next Week

SAMUEL BUTLER
By MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

THE NILE
By EMIL LUDWIG
Reviewed by Ellsworth Huntington

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literature. It wiped out forever the fashionable pseudo-classicism with its trite and stuffy linguistic trappings. It introduced the frank, unaffected realism which has become an inherent characteristic of Russian letters.

But the learned cat did not have Pushkin's entire attention during the four years that he was engaged upon "Ruslan and Ludmila." At the same time he was working on other poems which were inspired by tales of a different magic. They were concerned with liberty and the abolition of serfdom, and were told by the poet's Lyceum friends, Pushtchin, Kuchelbecker, Rayevsky, and older men who had served in the Napoleonic wars. Pushkin was in complete sympathy with this group of idealists who were beguiled by the early liberal tendencies of Alexander I and hoped for a Constitution and freedom for the serfs. But the Emperor went the way of all autocrats. Towards the later part of his reign he developed a persecution mania and lived in mortal terror of the ideas on government and democracy which his own officers were bringing back from abroad particularly France. Censorship and espionage appeared on the scene. After Waterloo came the Holy Alliance with Germany and Austria whose avowed purpose was the eradication of liberalism in Europe. The repressive activities of the Unholy Alliance, as the reformists called it, drove them underground and secret societies were organized all over Russia. Pushkin frequented several of these societies and wrote numerous revolutionary poems. Of these the "Ode to Liberty" is best known:

> And now learn, you Czars, that neither punishment nor rewards, nor the blood poured out in prison or on altars, are your true safeguard. Rather bend your head trustfully under the protection of the law, and People, Freedom, and Peace will stand perpetual guard around your throne.

Upon the publication of the ode, Alexander I decided to deal severely with the poet who "was filling Russia with seditious verse." Only the urgent pleading of the historian Karamzin and others saved Pushkin from being sent to Solovetzk, the Arctic islands which the Soviet Government has now converted into a huge concentration camp. He was dispatched instead to Kishinev, the newly acquired city in southern Russia.

Exile had the most deplorable effect upon our nineteen-year-old poet. Chagrin and loneliness drove him into intemperance and all manner of folly. He was very poor and in ill health when he was discovered by his friends, the Rayevskys, on their way south. They persuaded the authorities to let him go with them to the Crimea and the Caucasus. There he wrote some of his best lyrics. But he was soon compelled to return to Kishinev, and after he had made himself thoroughly disagreeable to the authorities he was transferred to Odessa. His behavior at Odessa was, if possible, even less exemplary.

In 1824 he was finally ordered to Mikhailovsk, his own estate in the province of Pskov. But even there he remained under surveillance, first by his own father, and later by a monk of the Pskov Monastery. Pushkin suffered from the constant espionage but did not interrupt his correspondence with his liberal friends. Barring occasional fits of boredom this period of his exile was a very beneficial one. His best pieces were written at Mikhailovsk, including "Boris Godunov," the major part of "Eugene Onegin," which he began in Kishinev, and the retelling of the inimitable nursery tales told to him by his nurse.

But while Pushkin was so engaged the political scene was changing with catastrophic rapidity. Alexander I died suddenly in December, 1825, and his successor, his brother Constantine, abdicated in favor of his younger brother Nicholas. Thereupon the reformists decided to make public their program. This they did on December 26, in a military demonstration in the Senate Square of St. Petersburg. The new emperor replied to the Decembrists' "plea for reform" by hanging five of their leaders. A hundred others were sentenced to hard labor in the Siberian mines. Among the latter were Pushtchin, Küchelbecker, and a number of other friends of the poet. Pushkin escaped being among the insurgents and so spending the rest of his life in Siberia because he was in Mikhailovsk at the time of the demonstration.

The news reached him there, and he succeeded in burning his papers. But the government knew of his affiliation with the Decembrists. Nicholas I summoned him to the palace. Pushkin's two hours' interview with the monarch is one of the most illuminating chapters in the life of the poet. It is an excellent example of his extraordinary courage. According to Pushkin's own story, after several days of hard travel and "covered with dirt" he was taken directly to the Kremlin and ushered into the presence of the emperor. After some conversation Nicholas said, "Pushkin, would you have participated on the 26th of December if you had been in St. Petersburg?" "Certainly, your Highness; all my friends were in the conspiracy; it would have been impossible for me not to participate," replied the poet. The Emperor said, "You have made enough of a fool of yourself. I hope that you will show better judgment in the future and we will have no reason to quarrel." Later he asked Pushkin what he was writing, and the poet replied: "Practically nothing, your Highness; the censorship is too strict." And in answer to the Czar's question as to why he wrote things that were not passed by the censor he said, "The censor refuses to pass the most innocent things." Thereupon the monarch offered to censor Pushkin's verse himself.

NATALYA NIKOLAEVNA PUSHKINA

At a ball that very evening the Emperor told Count Korpf that Pushkin had admitted he would have been among the insurgents. But when Nicholas asked whether the poet would now think and act differently if given his freedom, "he hesitated, and only after a long silence offered the Emperor his hand and promised to mend his ways." After Pushkin left the Kremlin the Emperor is said to have exclaimed, "Now he is mine." He tried in every way to attach the poet to himself. After Pushkin's marriage to Natalya Goncharov, whose beauty the Emperor admired, the poet was made an aide-de-camp. But Pushkin's independent nature, his pride and extreme sensitiveness were not the stuff that courtiers are made of. When informed that Nicholas had made him a chamberlain he exclaimed, "He will not make a Voltaire of me." He considered his new appointment a humiliation, resented the need of his presence among the "milksops," and seldom appeared at court on official occasions.

Nor did he even now interrupt his correspondence with the exiled Decembrists for whom he had a sincere love and admiration. The result was paradoxical. His relations with the palace, where his fashionable wife was a great favorite, remained unbroken, and at the same time he was continually under police surveillance. All his mail, including his letters to his wife, was opened by the police. Pushkin protested and made several attempts to resign his position at court and retire to his estate. The indignation of

(*Continued on page* 14)

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Heads I Win, Tails You Lose

VIEWED WITHOUT ALARM: Europe Today. By Walter Millis. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1937. $1.25.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

MR. MILLIS'S reputation as an analyst of the reasons why nations go to war gives importance to these brief impressions of Europe last fall. As the title suggests, he came back more hopeful than he went.

> The world war has been not coming for a year or two for a long time now. . . . Talk of war is a wearisome commonplace; the whole continent is infected and debilitated, like a malarial or hookworm area, by this poison for which it knows no remedy and from which it has ceased to expect relief. But it is conditioning itself to this scourge. It is developing its own kind of resistance—to a greater extent than most Americans seem to realize—to the sickness in its blood; and the fatal paroxysm may yet be delayed so long as to permit a real cure being developed.

To the determinists this will be heresy. But wars, however theoretically inevitable, come as and when they actually break out because of what individual men do or fail to do, and every year or two you can put them off is that much gained. If it is hard to share Mr. Millis's hopefulness beyond the next year or two, that is because he has swallowed a little too uncritically the reasoning of the British isolationists.

Pinchot

WALTER MILLIS

"The new alliance system, so similar to that of 1914 on the surface, is in fact a very different affair beneath. One cannot help being struck by the looseness, the uncertainty of the whole edifice, and by its capacity for that very reason to absorb shocks that would have destroyed the pre-war Europe." That is, if you never know whether your allies would really help you in a pinch, you have to be careful. True enough; and no doubt this acts as a brake on, for instance, French policy. But it is no brake on Hitler, who has no allies. "A war can hardly be planned satisfactorily without knowing what the British will do. And nobody—least of all the British—knows what they will do. I think it a great aid to peace." It was not an aid to peace in July 1914.

"It is a policy," Mr. Millis concedes, "which imposes its heavy costs. Ethiopia has been sacrificed to it, and republican Spain is now in the process of crucifixion. The Czechs may go tomorrow, or the Poles. But if it is peace that one is interested in, it has its important advantages." Implicit in this reasoning is the premise that to let the Germans have anything they want is a lesser evil than a general war—a view widely held in London, though subject there to the qualification that "anything they want" means anything that does not belong to the British. Now almost anything would be a lesser evil than a general war—unless a succession of local wars that ended by covering just as much territory, and to a more disastrous outcome. The results of the last war were so unsatisfactory that a good many people forget that they might easily have been worse. If the Germans, having absorbed let us say Czechoslovakia and Poland, were then willing to beat their swords into plowshares and be friends and brothers with the world forever after, this policy would make sense for everybody but Czechoslovakia and Poland. But it takes optimism to believe that.

Mr. Millis is an optimist. "The British are beginning to see through the imperial game. They ought to; they have played it so long themselves." Quite so; we hear a great deal of the weary titan, the burden of the empire, the unprofitableness of Tanganyika which was taken from the Germans. Then why not give Tanganyika back to them and let them incur the deficits? Ah, no. Anybody in London can explain to you that what the Germans really want is not Tanganyika but Angola, or the Belgian Congo. Unfortunately Hitler does not seem to know that.

In any case, German expansion has no terrors for Mr. Millis. "If the Nazis can create a going economic and social system in Central Europe it will be—however unpleasant for the lesser nations which it swallows—not a menace, but a market and a stabilizing force for the rest of the world." Only omniscience could deny that, but a touch of doubt is permissible. However, it seems to be a heads-I-win-tails-you-lose proposition. "If, as seems more probable, they are engaged upon an economically and socially hopeless experiment, then the more widely they expand the weaker they will be." So the Czechs, for instance, can die heroically in a hopeless defense of the democratic ideals they share with the English; solacing themselves with the thought that their resistance has weakened the Germans and thus made England a little safer. This policy looks more attractive in Whitehall than on the Hradčany; if saving yourself at the expense of others becomes the popular European pastime the Czechs might try to play that game too. Škoda as well as Krupp can make guns that could shoot across the Channel.

Nobody can blame the British for wanting to keep out of trouble; the only question is whether their present policies—if they are permanent, and not a mere marking time till the Royal Air Force is ready—are the best means to that end. The French and the Russians, the Belgians and the Dutch, the Czechs and the Poles, the Scandinavians and the Baltic peoples, would also like to keep out of trouble if they could; and quite possibly any of them would save themselves at the expense of all the rest if they thought it feasible. Criticism of British policy can be aimed only at its methods, not its objective. "Though it is not pleasant," says Mr. Millis, "the British are keeping the peace and liking it. In the process they are looking out primarily for Great Britain, but so far at least they have actually kept the peace. It is an example, it seems to me, which the United States might well emulate."

This puts the cart before the horse. Our isolation is an example which the British seem trying to emulate. They would have a better prospect of success if they had as little as we have that the Germans want, and if London were three thousand miles from the continent.

Lively Escape

ESCAPE TO THE TROPICS. By Desmond Holdridge. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

PERHAPS most comparable to this second book by Desmond Holdridge is Fleming's "Brazilian Adventure," and it should be welcomed with joy from among the ruck of tourists' tales and schoolboys' boasts and oh so tender (and very dull) geographical peans which have mired the market these years since. For "Escape To The Tropics" is written with gusto and sanity, and it is escape of the liveliest sort for any reader who takes his travels neat, unmuddled by the conclusions of half-knowledge and idle vision.

Holdridge and his wife, both chronic travelers, sought escape shamelessly after a trial of life in New York, deciding that continual flight was still the best thing for them, and the island of St. John in

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the West Indies an ideal first stop. Towards three A.M. the night of their arrival they were married, at a cost of forty cents. And with just such casual dispatch and economy they were soon settled in a tiny bungalow and living the life they had always dreamed.

It was hard to be serious among the childlike people of the Caribbees, who wondered, when the author questioned them, if Adolf Hitler was perhaps a "local man." Their curious dialect is perfectly transcribed and the book abounds in incidents of minor villainy and major humor encountered among the natives. Holdridge lived with them and sailed with them ("I dissatisfied! I dissatisfied!" moaned the black sailor who had just been called "de most disgustin' guts I ever had aboard" by the captain. "Dere too much stupidness in dis ship!").

Then one day he read a newspaper article which assumed that Paul Redfern, the lost aviator, was still alive in the South American savannahs. So he went off alone to find him, or at least to bring back a reasonably definitive answer to the mystery of his disappearance. In the latter he succeeded, after a journey as amusing as it was arduous up the Tapanahoni River in Dutch Guiana.

Holdridge writes as well as Peter Fleming, and obviously enjoys his adventures even more. Like Fleming's, his book is admirable for honesty and modesty; he is not afraid to admit it when he makes a fool of himself; he doesn't pretend to despise the amenities of civilization; he knows that he loses nothing of personal honor by honoring his very gallant wife; and he is frank to tell of their not infrequent joyous drunks before or after breakfast because life had been good to them and needed celebrating.

These tales have teeth to hold the most capricious interest; and when a book bites a reviewer, that's really news.

Naval War at Its Grimmest

TSUSHIMA. By A. Novikoff-Priboy. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. $3.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT G. ALBION

THIS remarkable book will probably win a high place among the great narratives of naval warfare. After reading it, one is not surprised that in three years more than a million copies of the original Russian version have been sold. The subject is one of the most dramatic in the history of sea fighting: the long voyage of the Russian squadron under Rozhesvensky from the Baltic around Good Hope to the Orient and its virtual annihilation by the Japanese in the Strait of Tsushima in May, 1905.

That story, of course, has been told before, but not in this form. The unique feature of the Novikoff-Priboy account is that, instead of being written by an officer or a landsman, it is the work of a very intelligent foremast hand, combining his own experiences and impressions with those of other enlisted men whose stories he carefully gathered during his imprisonment in Japan after the battle. With a wealth of actual conversations and illustrative details, we are shown naval warfare in its grimmest form from the viewpoint of those upon whom it bore most heavily.

The author was a paymaster's steward on the battleship *Oryol;* his principal function seems to have been the rationing of grog. He indicates that, like many of the others, he was assigned to the squadron because of his suspected radical tendencies; the Admiralty, apparently, felt that such men could best be spared for a forlorn hope. The merciless thumbnail sketches of many of the officers and the general arraignments of naval inefficiency should, perhaps, be discounted somewhat in view of the author's prejudices against the old regime; and there may have been a more mutinous spirit in that squadron than in other units of the Russian navy if the crews were deliberately hand-picked as radicals. One officer even kept a copy of Karl Marx hidden in his ikon of St. Nicholas.

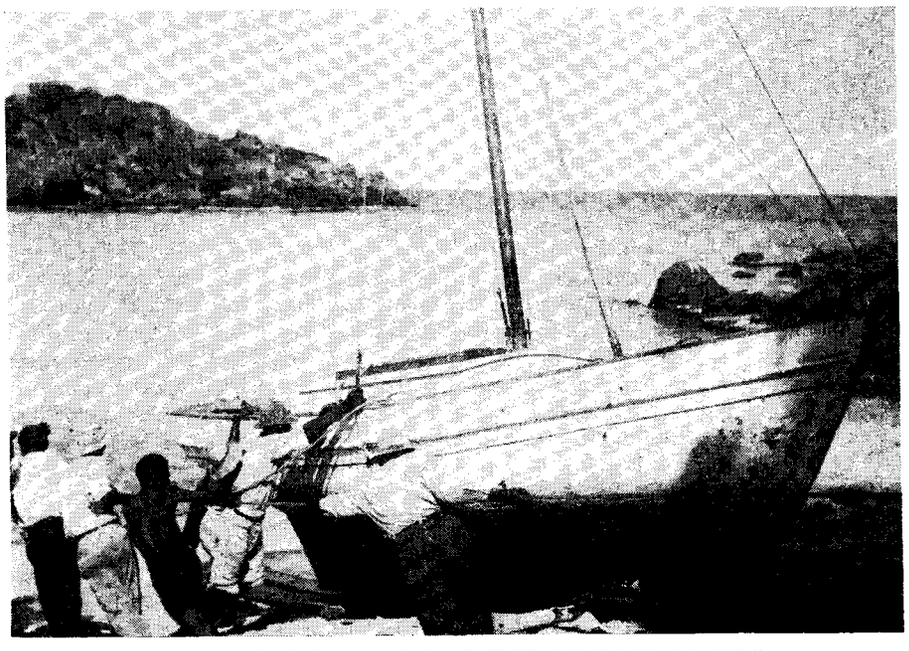
The general morale was low from the very outset and it was not improved by the spectacle of panicky bungling in firing on the harmless Dogger Bank trawlers. The sense of impending disaster seemed to hang over everyone. Discipline deteriorated rapidly; there were several cases of near mutiny. While coaling off Madagascar, one of the seamen threw down his shovel and started off for a rest. He was reprimanded by the executive officer, Commander Sidoroff.

> Federoff's face flushed and he glared at his superior with bloodshot eyes (he had been drinking heavily).
>
> "I'm not afraid of you, sir. I'm not afraid of anything now. We shall all be dead soon, and you'll drown as easy as the rest. We'll make a fine pair of stiffs. The Japs will send every man Jack of us to hell. Do you think I care a tinker's curse if you draw that pistol of yours and put a bullet through my head? I'm fed up, I tell you."
>
> Sidoroff got out of the way, saying: "Go to hell if you like. It's all the same to me." In this case, too, insubordination remained unpunished.

Soon afterward, there was a session of miserable gunnery drill. "When the target was hoisted on board for the last time, it had not even been splintered." Stoker Baklanoff, one of the most outspoken characters of the book, voiced the common sentiment in remarking that "Every man Jack of us will be food for fishes before long." Throughout the long cruise, Admiral Rozhesvensky continually signalled insulting messages to most of his captains; one for instance, was called "that stinking liberal."

The author is scathing in his condemnation of Rozhesvensky's strategy and tactics when the crisis finally came, but those have been the subject of numerous critical studies. The value of this account lies in its minutely realistic relation of the tragic consequences. The flagship, *Suvoroff,* at the head of the column, was the first to receive terrific punishment from the accurate Japanese gunnery. Explaining that before the battle, the admiral "had taken no steps to acquaint even his closest collaborators with his plans," the author shows us the conning tower, "the directing brain of the fleet."

> The occupants of the conning-tower had by this time been too much demoralized by the furious bombardment to attempt observation. Terror made the



"HARL, MON, HARL! SURRENDER DE ROPE TO ME!"
From "Escape to the Tropics."

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chiefs crouch on the deck, where they were shielded by the armour-plate wall of the tower. Only the bluejackets remained at their posts . . . while their officers squatted or knelt. Even the stubborn and imperious Rozhesvensky stooped lower and lower to avoid the hail of splinters. At length, like all the officers, he was on his knees. In fact, he set a pusillanimous example. In this humiliating posture, his head drawn down on his chest, he looked more like an intimidated passenger than the commander of a squadron.

Wounded at last, the admiral and the few other survivors escaped below and the squadron was without leadership. The *Suvoroff,* a flaming wreck, drew out of line and guidance fell to the next ship, which in turn received the brunt of the fire. No one knows what happened aboard the *Alexander III,* for not a man of her nine hundred survived. Only one escaped from the *Borodino,* a gunner from the bow casemate, who had a grim tale to tell:

> At this moment a look-out man rushed in, his shirt torn and his face splashed with blood. "Where are the officers?" he shouted, looking round. "Here's a dead one," answered a member of the gun-crew. "Just finished off. What do you want an officer for?" "There's not one of them to be found. We've hunted everywhere. All killed or wounded. No one to take command of the ship." . . . The *Borodino* continued to steam ahead, shaken from moment to moment by enemy shells. There were no officers in charge. . . . Whither was she steering? No one had any clear idea, not even the helmsman, but as long as her engines worked, she could keep on a course of some sort. She was followed blindly by the squadron, by ships on which there were numerous captains and three admirals.

There are graphic descriptions of what happened as various ships went down and considerable is said about the suspicious manner in which Rozhesvensky, rescued by a destroyer, allowed himself to be captured by the Japanese. Animus, perhaps, has distorted the estimates of his conduct and that of some other officers but, whatever one may think about that, no reader will soon forget the devastating effects of the Japanese twelve-inch shells upon the ships and men of the unhappy squadron.

The appearance of this book was delayed nearly thirty years because the author, on his return to Russia, intrusted his copious notes to his brother because he himself was under police suspicion as a radical. His brother forgot where he hid them and not until 1928 were they discovered in an old beehive. The translators, Eden and Cedar Paul, are to be commended for their performance in bringing over into English so much of the colloquial flavor. The only word which strikes one as awkward is "ironclad," in place of battleship, but perhaps that is the closest equivalent to the original.

Robert G. Albion, associate professor of history at Princeton University, is the author of "Forests and Sea Power."

Magnified Memories

THE GROWN-UPS. By Catharine Whitcomb. New York: Random House. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by FRANCES WOODWARD

IT is a difficult literary job to write a story from the point of view of a child. Instantly a novelist makes such a choice he limits himself to a horizon, a vocabulary, and an emotional understanding almost impossible to play fair with for more than a few pages at a time. And, inevitably, he must be at least in part autobiographical, since the only child that an adult thinks himself capable of "understanding" is the shadowy, mythical child he believes himself to have been. In "The Grown-Ups" Catharine Whitcomb has placed this handicap on her real ability to write and produced a book which despite many vivid passages fails in the long run to be as impressive as it should be.

Miss Whitcomb's heroine Camilla is the oversensitive, mentally precocious child of much divorced, much remarried parents. We meet her when she is four and we leave her on the steps of a country club when she is seventeen. In the interval she has shuttled miserably from one home to another, from day school to boarding school, from insecurity to despair, and back to insecurity again. It is an angry, tortured story of which the best sustained and most believable parts are Camilla's life until she is six or so, and the period she spends at a seashore resort, and at an almost identifiable school in the Connecticut hills. I am sure that, accused of hyperbole, Miss Whitcomb would reply that the story is "all true." I wonder. Beyond question Miss Whitcomb, looking back at her childhood, thinks it is true. But looking back is tricky work, depending for its accuracy on how well the individual is adjusted in his own present state of "grown-up." There is a distortion of chronology and event in all childhood memories. Everything in childhood lasted forever. We skated, for example, "every single day" during a winter which must have stretched from October until May. And, I do believe, most grown-ups were shadowy folk unless they interfered with you or hurt you. Their kindnesses were as unremarked as blankets and food, their quite unexplainable rages, however infrequent, were brutal, deliberate tortures. I myself, from a safe and unbroken home, attended the next school down the valley from Camilla's, where I wept dismally for a large part of two years. But I was not, as I believed for quite a while afterward, in tears during every waking moment.

Tragedy must not be belittled, at whatever age it assails you. My quarrel with Miss Whitcomb is that she seems still so tangled in her heroine's early miseries as

CATHARINE WHITCOMB

to render her incapable of reporting them with the sifted accuracy which would make them really impressive. She writes with the authority of knowledge about people who are gently bred, socially and financially well placed. That such people, and such people engaged in an unending battle for the affections of a divorce-divided child, should employ for a year or more a nursemaid whose cruelties were psychopathic, and should one and all at various intervals beat the child they longed to make their partisan and curse her like roustabouts and fishwives, seems to me debatable. Once or twice, perhaps. . . . But we didn't really skate *every* day *all* winter. . . . No, Miss Whitcomb, granted things were bad for Camilla, they were not, I am sure, what you now think. And certainly not wholly for the reasons you give. Without question divorced parents do, in varying degrees, raise hard emotional problems for their children. Indisputably Miss Whitcomb has written better than most about the artificial forcing houses which are the ultra-fashionable, fabulously expensive, American girls' boarding schools. But the Camillas of this world have miseries if their parents were married once or five times, and the rosiest adolescence is no picnic.

It is easy, and perhaps unfair, to pick places in the book where the child's perceptions, feelings, insight into the personalities of the grown-ups are impossibly beyond her stated age. That, as I said before, is the fatal difficulty of relating events through a child's mind. Knowing now what it was the child saw we believe she saw it then. Catharine Whitcomb has a good ear for dialogue and a good eye for detail. But the uncontrolled, masochistic welter of emotion blunts the reader's capacity for belief, and detracts from Miss Whitcomb's writing ability and the cause she wants it to serve.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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My Dear Edmund Wilson:

LET me explain to the subscribers of *The Saturday Review* that I am abandoning my editorial anonymity because, in *The New Republic*, you have challenged me to "stand and unfold" myself. You want to know the bases, though I understand you to imply the singular, from which I am editing this magazine. If you are interested in knowing them, conceivably some of our subscribers are too, which justifies this answer. But I estimate that I should need at least forty thousand words for an adequate statement, and my editorial judgment is that the magazine cannot devote so much space to such an enterprise. You must take fifteen hundred and let the rest develop informally as I go on editing the *Review*.

Your article seems to me sensible and very fair. You are partly wrong in thinking of me as an academic: I was a full-time teacher for only the first of my seven years on the Harvard faculty, I have no graduate training or degrees, and such scholarship as I may claim is in the field of American social history. You ignore some rather important points made in my book about Mark Twain and, I think, misunderstand certain others. Let me say too, as gently as possible, that I think you take too seriously certain essays of mine which most people take, and which I intended, as jokes. You see, I never anticipated holding such an office as this and, when I was younger and much given to sin, I sometimes seized a chance to exploit the merely comic values. There are other assertions in your article with which I should take issue if I could have my forty thousand words, but I must disregard them here if I am to say anything about your central point.

You complain that you cannot make out, in my criticism at least, any unified, articulated system of ideas to which I am referring when I pass judgment on books and ideas. You ask me to forsake the seats of the scornful and state what my system is. What set of ideas do I champion? What generalizations do I stand on? What theory of the world, what metaphysics, what structure of abstractions? The answer is brief: None. I have no such system and I profoundly disbelieve in such systems.

For, you see, this is a demand for a gospel, and I have been acquainted with it since my earliest days. I was brought up in a religion which taught that man was imperfect but might expect God's mercy —but I was surrounded by a revealed religion founded by a prophet of God, composed of people on the way to perfection, and possessed of an everlasting gospel. I early acquired a notion that all gospels were false and all my experience since then has confirmed it. All my life people around me have been seeing a Light that, with a vision certified as excellent by the best oculists, I have been unable to see. At first astonishing contradictions in the reports they gave me troubled my mind but, you will understand, I came to conclude that absolutes were a mirage. And in my desert country mirages are also commonplace.

I distrust absolutes. Rather, I long ago passed from distrust of them to opposition. And with them let me include prophecy, simplification, generalization, abstract logic, and especially the habit of mind which consults theory first and experience only afterward. That would have been the simplest way to describe me for your purposes, since it accounts for most of the objections you raise: that I have attacked a lot of people whose ideas seemed to me out of touch with known facts and common experience. People who prefer the conclusions of logic to the testimony of their senses. People who do not recognize that the behavior of the human race cannot be accommodated to a syllogism. People who ask the race to be logical about illogical matters and rational about irrational ones—and who slump into despair and the lust for dictatorship because it refuses to be. People who insist on applying deductive reasoning—and prophecy—in areas where it is the testimony of experience and common sense that deductive reasoning and prophecy have no force.

I am, if you must have words, a pluralist, a relativist, an empiricist. I am at home with the concrete inquiries of historians and scientists, and uneasy among the abstractions of critics and metaphysicians. I confine myself to limited questions; I try to use methods that can be controlled by fact and experience; I am unwilling to let enthusiasm or desire or a vision of better things carry me farther than the methods will go by themselves. I rest ultimately on experience and, where that fails, on common sense. No one need tell me how incomplete and imperfect they are, how misinterpretation and falsification betray them, how tentative, fragile, and unsatisfactory the conclusions we base on them must be. I know: but they are more dependable than anything else. They are, especially, more dependable than gospels.

So I leave to others the elaboration of systems and theories that transcend them, that go beyond. My job is to carry limited objectives: to test the data that are presented to me and, so far as I can, separate the factual from the illusory, the experimental from the guessed, the verifiable from the hoped and desired. This will not get me far and, in the mass, it will not get the race far. But if it gets us only a little way, that little will be subject to use and control, and it will stand. At any rate, that is what I choose to do, leaving general ideas and systems of thought and theory to others. I can be fairly sure of the empirical fact—but I am even surer that the great system, however inspiring, animated by whatever nobility or benevolence or terror, is out of touch with things as they are. If the instruments with which you measure a continent are wrong by so little as one minute in a degree, still you will come out at the end with a grotesquely false description of the continent, and any maps you make will grossly delude those who try to follow you, possibly into catastrophe. But the instruments of thought which our system-makers use must at best err far more than that one-sixtieth of a degree. As, perhaps, I shall be able to show you from time to time.

I wonder if you are not troubled because you understand this master-condition of prophecy? You are something of a Marxist, but are not the seismic shocks in your association with other Marxists due to your perception of the difference between prophecy and experience? Your allies, who periodically become your enemies, look at the map which Marx has made of the present and the future, and where Marx says a mountain or a molehill must be found, they find it whether it is there or not. But sometimes you refuse to submit the testimony of your senses and your experience to the dictation of the gospel, and once more your allies excommunicate you. But sometimes you do not refuse. You tell me, for instance, that Marx and Engels exploded Utopian socialism almost a century ago. Oh, my dear Wilson! They merely asked us not to apply that label to their gospel. Is not Russia resolutely demonstrating to us that the dictatorship of the proletariat is no more than a Utopian vision? Or if you will not agree to that, what about the classless society? And you tell me that my outline of Mormon history exemplifies Marx. Perhaps, but the weightier consideration is that it exemplifies Pareto's criticism of Marx.

(I suppose that you and others will sometime force me, in sheer boredom, to discuss the application of Pareto to literary thinking. I am not much of a Paretian. I am mainly interested in finding out how useful Pareto's method of analy-

(*Continued on page* 20)

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Letters to the Editor: *Authors vs. Reviewers; Illiteracy before 1066*

Reviews and Rebuttals

SIR:—In my reply to your editorial of December 12 [on Letters to the Editor] which you were good enough both to publish on January 2nd and to consider in your own editorial columns on that same date, we agreed that a short and factual letter is neither a possible nor an effective means of rebuttal for the author. Nevertheless, in the third paragraph of your editorial you offered as your only remedy the fact that *The Saturday Review* is willing to publish any "relevant corrections which the author or anyone else" sends in.

I think it fair to ask whether you are not clinging here to a solution in which you yourself have little faith, with a secret feeling that the problem is really insoluble. I cannot accept such a gloomy view of the situation without one more struggle for an answer, and therefore beg your indulgence if I discuss it again.

It seems to me that either of the solutions which I originally suggested is feasible and practicable, and that a third one might also be considered. I should have stated explicitly, however, that the problem is important culturally only with regard to one group of books. It should be obvious that it does not apply particularly to reviews of poetry or fiction. And I think that we can also rule out those purely technical works which reach only technically trained audiences, and which therefore should be reviewed only in technical journals of science, history, economics, art, and the like. What we have in mind here is the problem which is created by that growing body of literature which deals with technical topics for intelligent laymen. Such books are usually in highly controversial fields: the facts and interpretations of history, economics, capitalism vs. socialism, the organization of society, the impact of modern science on human life and religion, sex, and the like. In such matters, feelings tend to run high, and prejudices can be exploited all too easily, both by authors and by reviewers alike. Nevertheless these books are of great significance in the evolution of the thinking community of this country. Therefore for them it is particularly important that careful, fair, and accurate, and at the same time hard-hitting and unsparing criticism should be meted out. Sometimes these books are reviewed in technical journals; but such reviews do not reach the general public, and do not affect the reception of the book by the community at large. It is the review of such books in journals such as yours which is of general importance; and it is for them that a special technique of review or rebuttal is needed.

For this limited group of books, therefore, I would make three alternative suggestions, two old, and one new: (1) that if an author can convince the editors of *The Saturday Review* that his book has been significantly distorted and misrepresented in the review, the editors of the magazine, without publishing the details of the controversy, shall make an official disclaimer of the review; (2) that all seriously denunciatory reviews shall be submitted to the author, and that the author and the reviewer shall be required to iron out their differences of opinion *as to what the book says*, not their differences of attitude towards the ideas or opinions expressed, before the review is released and printed; or (3) that all such books should be given two simultaneous reviews, one by a proponent of the author's main position, and the other by an opponent.

Others may find a better solution to this problem than any of these three; but I cannot accept the attitude that although it does no good there is no better alternative than the feeble gesture of publishing an indignant author's useless protest.

I would add one further word, which is that my challenge is directed less towards *The Saturday Review of Literature* than to any other magazine which publishes serious book criticisms. These letters have been addressed to you because your own editorial of December 12th raised the topic; and I thank you for your hospitality in allowing the discussion to proceed this far.

HAYES HARRISON.

Rochester, N. Y.

The Conquest of English

SIR:—The editorial in your number of Jan. 23 is so good that I am moved to make it better by righting the only mistake I find in it. Mr. Canby touches the Middle Ages at one point, and in so doing he slips up. He says, "When used by illiterates of the 12th and 13th centuries, Anglo-Saxon, a highly inflected language, broke down its grammar into its present analytical simplicity. What seemed a calamity proved to be a vital gain for the speech." But English was used by illiterates before the 12th and 13th centuries. In King Alfred's century, the 9th, it was hard to find anybody who could read and write, and though by the 11th conditions had greatly improved, literacy remained highly exceptional; it was practically confined to the clergy, and most of these had little book-learning beyond the elements. At no time in the Middle Ages, indeed, can written English truly be said to have any influence on the inflexional system. The calamity to which Mr. Canby refers was, no doubt, the Norman Conquest, and certainly one of the effects of this Conquest was to reduce the number and the importance of those who read and wrote English, but such readers and writers had always been far too few to keep English inflexions from changing. Had there never been a Norman Conquest, our present inflexional system, in all likelihood, would have come into being much as it actually came. The fallacy into which Mr. Canby fell is the common one of reading the past in terms of the present. Nowadays written English works strongly against inflexional change; in the Middle Ages such workings were negligible. Not so in the matter of vocabulary; but that is another story.

KEMP MALONE.

The Johns Hopkins University,
Baltimore, Md.

Chautauqua

SIR:—As a native of Chautauqua County, N. Y., interested in orthographic rectitude, I should like to submit that the name *Chautauqua* is not spelled *Chatauqua*. Rather frequently I see this erroneous spelling in print, the latest being in Mr. V. F. Calverton's recent article in the *Saturday Review*.

According to Mr. J. N. B. Hewitt, Smithsonian Institution ethnologist, the word *Chautauqua* is derived from the Seneca word *T'kĕñchiată ''kwĕⁿ*, meaning "one has taken out fish there," referring to Chautauqua Lake, and that should make it as clear as the n. on your f. that there should be three *u's* in the word. I can find no dictionary authority for any other spelling. It is sometimes seen also with a lower-case c (allowed but not preferred by Webster's Dictionary), but I don't like that either.

PAUL H. OEHSER,
Editor of the United
States National Museum.

Washington, D. C.

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Most Maligned of Americans?

AARON BURR: THE PROUD PRETENDER. By Holmes Alexander. New York: Harper & Bros. 1937. $3.50.

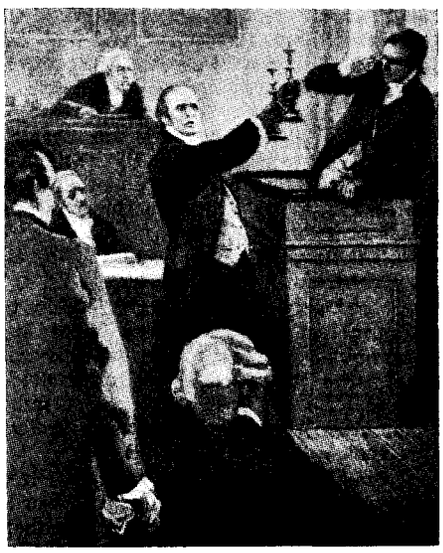
AARON BURR IN LITERATURE. By Samuel H. Wandell, New York: Barnes & Noble. 1937. $4.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

LONG decades ago James Parton wrote in his life of Burr one of the few American biographies which deserve the overworked adjective "fascinating." Since then a wealth of new data has been made accessible about this most enigmatic of characters, and this career so rich in mingled brilliancy and darkness, in success and disaster, in the attractive and the repellent. Whether viewed psychologically or historically, the tale of Aaron Burr is one of the most striking in our records. Yet in all the years since Parton, only two biographies worthy of the name have been written: one not long ago by Samuel Wandell and Meade Minnigerode summing up the results of recent scholarship, and this by Mr. Alexander composed with a more literary intention. Why has Burr been so neglected? His career gives the answer. Woodrow Wilson said that he was one of the most maligned of all Americans. But allow in full for party slander and personal abuse, and there remains in Burr's life a proved sum of vice, folly, heartlessness, and crime that makes men shrink from him still, and that to the end of time will give his name a sombre ring. Doubtless it is the heartlessness of the man, the levity and shallow irresponsibility of his character, that weigh most heavily against him. His machinations, his reckless plunges, his injuries to the young republic, would not count so strongly had there not been something fundamentally false and mean in his soul. Biography has till lately done what his own generation finally decided to do—drawn its skirts aside, and avoided him.

Yet his story *must* be told, and as here written in popular style by Mr. Alexander, it is one that cannot be laid down. There are two ways of dealing with Burr's long, stormy life. The first is to treat its succession of highly controversial and puzzling events with all the resources of scholarship and historical analysis; the other is to treat it as a wonderfully varied and richly colored adventure story, cutting through the controversies with summary verdicts, and emphasizing incident and character. Messrs. Wandell and Minnigerode followed the first line; Mr. Alexander, like Parton before him, takes the second. He has done wisely. Scholars can turn to the careful if somewhat oversympathetic two-volume work by Wandell and Minnigerode, and to monographs like Walter F. McCaleb's on the conspiracy; but a racing, well written, dramatic narrative, done with due regard for accuracy, has been much needed by the general public. If Mr. Alexander does not quite satisfy us on some of the controversies, it is to be considered that probably nobody ever will. The full truth about Burr in New York politics, or his connection with the plots of New England separatists, or his intentions in the great Southwestern conspiracy, may never be known. Meanwhile, Mr. Holmes's guesses are as good as anybody's and quite good enough for the book. It is more important to spend time, as he does, in analyzing Burr's strange medley of traits.

America has been prolific of unscrupulous adventurers. But most of them have appeared in such fields as business, finance, war, and municipal and State politics; Burr is by all odds the most conspicuous adventurer who ever made any high mark in national politics, in Federal affairs. We may hazard the guess that even his brilliant gifts would never have carried him so far save in the plastic and somewhat guileless infancy of the republic. In any later period, except perhaps the confusion following the Civil War, he would have been found out—that is, popularly found out—much earlier than he was. For his amoral egotism, raising him above all sense of responsibility to ethics, religion, or tradition, made it impossible for him ever to play a simple, honest role on any stage. He was the hero of the march to Quebec in 1775—but he had to have an Indian strumpet by his side. He was a keen-witted addition to the group about Washington in 1776—but he had to quarrel with and abuse his commander. He was a leader of the New York bar—but he was meddling constantly in the dirtiest of Martling's-Room politics. He thought he could walk arm in arm between a base and a good angel—and finally the good angel grew tired of the company and vanished. Thus the man who in 1801 came within one vote of the Presidency, who even after it was lost might still be considered a potential successor of Jefferson, made himself three years later a murderer, and five years later a suspected traitor. Murderer is a harsh name, but the killing of Hamilton was deliberately planned and deliberately carried out. Traitor is a harsh word, but if Burr was no traitor to his country—and the best evidence is that he was not—he was indubitably a traitor to a long list of devoted and deluded followers.



"BEHOLD THE MURDERER!"
Sketch by C. H. Stephens, from "Aaron Burr: the Proud Pretender."

Mr. Alexander not only tells his story well; he holds his scales fairly even. If here and there he is too sympathetic, that is only because everybody yields here and there to the spell of Burr's personality. The author does not think that Burr wished to promote a New England Confederacy; Henry Adams believed otherwise, but in this modern scholarship is with Mr. Alexander. The author does not think that the Southwestern conspiracy had a treasonable character, and again the weightiest evidence is on his side. Directed against Spain, it was criminal enough, but no hanging matter. The two worst charges against Burr are thus set aside. But no one can deny that Burr, knowing that he was a dead shot and meaning death, pertinaciously goaded Hamilton into a duel. Nobody can deny that he made use of the most unblushing fraud, mendacity, and double-dealing in pushing his conspiracy, and that he could complain of nothing when General Wilkinson repaid him in kind. No one can deny that in this affair he ruined confiding men by dozens without a qualm. Mr. Alexander does not deny it, and suggests that Burr would have done well to send a bullet into his own brain after the Richmond acquittal. His reading of the man's character is perhaps too simple; he explains Burr's darker acts in terms of egotism, when sheer levity had quite as much to do with them. An egotist *pur sang*, a Machiavellian or Napoleonic egotist would not have gambled with his own fortunes in the irresponsible way in which Burr again and again staked them on a throw. Mr. Alexander treats of Burr's endless amatory adventures, which he detailed in his journal for his own daughter's eyes, as questionable in taste rather than morals. This is too mild. They are a nauseous indication of his abiding heartlessness, the lightness that made nothing of the feelings or fate of others, and called nothing sacred. Burns's lines upon acts that "harden a' within" would no more have been understood by Burr than he understood Mrs. Hamilton's grief or the public wrath after Hamilton's death. He had nothing within to harden.

The treatment of subordinate figures in the book is for the most part notably fair. Hamilton is given all his gallant de-

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serts. Jefferson is in general handled justly, though it might have been explained that some of his courtesies to Burr—whom he inwardly despised—had a connection with the Chase trial. Poltical expediency demanded them. The author should have gone more deeply into the election of 1800. He would have profited from a wider use of printed materials; for example, Julius Pratt's writings on expansionism, which help illuminate the conspiracy, and the Claiborne Papers. He has made no effort to explore such manuscript collections as the Durrett, Wilkinson, Jefferson, and Madison Papers. A few slips of fact may be noted. But on the whole this is an accurate, comprehensive, and vividly written biography, which is far more interesting than most fiction, and deserves a wide reading. It has much though not all of Parton's fascination, and it corrects and amplifies Parton in the light of subsequent research. It helps to explain how a man could do what Burr did, and yet be honored and loved by so acute a woman as his daughter Theodosia and so shrewd a man as Matthew Davis; how he could be first idol and then devil to tens of thousands.

Mr. Wandell has given us in his "Aaron Burr in Literature" a valuable source book and bibliography combined. It represents wide and intelligent research. A great variety of books, pamphlets, and articles bearing upon Burr are listed and described, and long quotations are furnished from writings not readily accessible. These quotations include matter upon Burr's principal contemporaries. The book thus becomes useful to general students of the period, while not a little of it is entertaining to the amateur of history. Facsimiles and reproductions of unusual portraits add to the interest. The historical notes, like the critical matter upon the various titles, show rather too strong a disposition to take Burr's part not only against the "vituperative pamphleteers" and "mendacious and unconscionable scribblers" of his own day, but against subsequent critics.

Old Focus

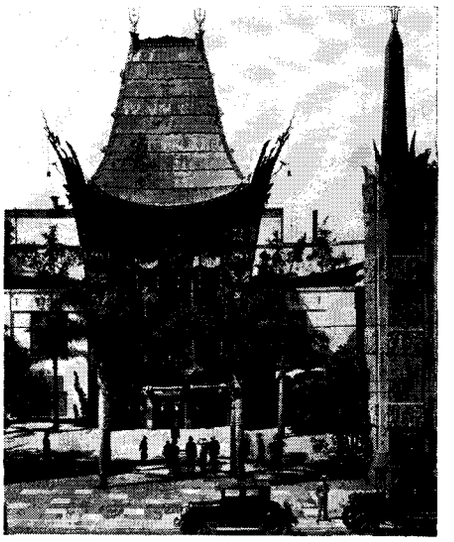
THE ROAD TO NEEDLES. By Dorothy Speare. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1937. $2.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

NEEDLES is a curious little collection of cacti, 'dobe, and Mexican section hands on the Arizona side of the California boundary. Its significance to this novel is that it is the watering point for trains carrying disgruntled studio writers from their Fades and Dissolves and other thin paraphernalia of motion pictures to more legitimate locations and uses of their typewriters.

Martha Phillips, Miss Speare's heroine, is a liberated young woman and an author with the stern background of a ministerial manse among the rocks and hills of New England. She is on her first, fluttery, Hollywood assignment and, being a preacher's daughter, behaves in the traditional manner. Her first and worst break is to fall in love with a playwright —careless tweeds, bored manner, hip flask, etc., who gets drunk because it is his only means of diversion. He has the peculiarity of never reading anything at all. He has never heard of Galatea. It is possible that a man could become an important playwright without ever having heard of Galatea—Bulfinch's, at least, if not W. S. Gilbert's—but the odds are astronomical.

After her first big Hollywood party the preacher's daughter invites the playwright to her hotel room without benefit of asterisks, and this episode is followed by marriage—for no particular reason, since the parties are agreed throughout three hundred pages that they won't suit each other. At the end, displeased with her husband and with Hollywood, Martha goes back to the purifying influences of the good old stony hills, via Needles, and Eugene O'Neill can go shoot himself. "De-



Paramount
GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATRE

sire Under the Elms" indeed! What about the Dutch Elm Disease?

"The Road to Needles," with a multitude of subsidiary plots, is readable, and there are many details sufficiently accurate to make any reformed Hollywood writer smile. There is the jockeying over contracts, when the writer is a dear old friend if he is needed but business is business if he isn't; there is the careless and swift cruelty to studio cripples; there is even too little about the studio caste system.

The general social picture of the writer's life in Hollywood is, however, untrue and unjust so far as this reviewer has been able to observe. At least, Martha Phillips was unfortunate in her associations. The foul-mouthed cads, incipient rapists, drunkards, and introspective idiots of "The Road to Needles" are far from representative of the average intelligent, orderly-lived people who take their livings from the studios by writing.

Anyone who has known or known of the top-notchers in the business—Rupert Hughes, Zane Grey, Julien Josephson, Browne Holmes, Milt MacKaye, Nunnally Johnson—anyone who is acquainted with their quiet and industrious ways of life will shake his head over Miss Speare's book. This list ignores an important and serious group of excellent writers who are deliberately trying to clarify the expression of "talkies" and bring it to the status of an art—gentlemen like Paul Green, John Lawson, Laurence Stallings, who are much too busy to indulge in the goin's on of "The Road to Needles."

There is a sober story to be written of authors in Hollywood, but it is the story of capable men and women who, without taking pictures seriously or feeling proper respect for their own talents, put off their novels or plays "just one more year" for $1,000 a week. "The Road to Needles" is not that novel.

Chiaroscuro

(To a January Wind from the Rockies)

By KATHARINE SHEPARD HAYDEN

WHERE you have come from tells in the long sound,
Swelling and thinning by my windows here—
Dark, heaven-cutting rocks, and snow-sunk ground
Gave you that bitterness; and the blind fear
Came as you crossed the open winter plains
With that unearthly, desolating cry!
And now you shake and beat my window-panes,
Shouting down alleys here, and melting by
Like some distraught and disembodied woe!
Until I heard your voice under the night
How could I gauge my comfort, or quite know
How warm this shelter, and how fair this light,
(Steady under the wild sky's yeasty gloom)—
How sweet the safety of this little room!

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

Mathematical Evening

I HAD quite different plans for the Green this week, but I happened to pick up a little book by Hubert Phillips, called *Brush Up Your Wits;* and the evening is almost gone already. I know Mr. Phillips of old, and have a deep respect for his ingenuity. Some of his previous books of puzzles and mathematical diversions were a bit steep for me (I have earlier referred to Caliban's Problem Book, for instance) but here Reach and Grasp became commensurate. This kind of thing fascinates me, and gives a healthy respect for those powers of logic and calculation which we all possess and mostly allow to fust unused. Whereas most Self-Starter books (*How To Be Masterful; How To Influence Your Co-Mammals; Soft Answers to Hard Questions or Stupefying Sales Resistance,* etc.) are simply whistleberries, here is something with which a moderately intelligent reader can sit down (not curl up) for real fun. And emerge therefrom not beaconing an eye of command but with wholesome shame for his own feebleness.

Let me take, for instance, the first one of Mr. Phillips's problems that I fell upon. It allured me because he calls it *The Lily of Malud,* which is the name of a poem in black and silver by J. C. Squire. This is how Mr. Phillips employs the theme:—

"A certain pond in Central America is a perfect circle 20 feet in diameter. Every year a magnificent water-lily appears in the exact center of the pond. The lily grows with remarkable rapidity, doubling its area every day; at the end of exactly 21 days, the lily fills the entire area of the pond. Then it dies away and for twelve months no more is seen of it.

"At the end of how many days from its first appearance does the lily occupy half the area of the pond?"

Well, I have no doubt that you are a lot quicker than I am. I filled half a sheet of paper with cheerful little calculations, using πr^2 for areas, and trying to figure a formula for a duplicating progression . . . I even reread Sir Jack Squire's poem looking for some clue . . . and was getting ready to look up the answer in the back of the book when in a dazzle of innocent pleasure I saw that the answer was implicit in the very statement of the problem. Talk about Live Alone and Like It—*that's* the kind of solitary ecstasy when the mind falls on its own neck and embraces itself.

Mr. Phillips's puzzles often give one the ancillary pleasure of ingenious and very shrewd little short stories. If you examine them carefully you may observe some agreeable little side-swipes. Here is a literary fable; I finally worked it out, but it gave me some bad moments:—

"At Bumpstead Garden City we have a very strong Literary Circle. Prominent members of the Circle are Mr. and Mrs. Shakespeare, Mr. and Mrs. Milton, Mr. and Mrs. Blake, Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, and Mr. and Mrs. Keats.

"The five poets Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, Wordsworth, and Keats are each the favorite poet of one of the above gentlemen and also of one of the above ladies. But in no case is a poet the favorite of a namesake, or of a namesake's wife, and in no case have husband and wife a favorite poet in common.

"I have also elicited the following facts: Mr. Blake's favorite poet is Wordsworth, Mr. Shakespeare's favorite poet is Blake, Mrs. Keats dislikes both Blake's work and Milton's, Mrs. Wordsworth has no use for Keats, Mrs. Milton 'can't abide' Shakespeare. The favorite poet of the wife of the namesake of Mrs. Blake's favorite poet is the namesake of the lady whose favorite poet is Blake.

"Who is the favorite poet of Mr. Keats?"

200	217	232	249	8	25	40	57	72	89	104	121	136	153	168	185
58	39	26	7	250	231	218	199	186	167	154	135	122	103	90	71
198	219	230	251	6	27	38	59	70	91	102	123	134	155	166	187
60	37	28	5	252	229	220	197	188	165	156	133	124	101	92	69
201	216	233	248	9	24	41	56	73	88	105	120	137	152	169	184
55	42	23	10	247	234	215	202	183	170	151	138	119	106	87	74
203	214	235	246	11	22	43	54	75	86	107	118	139	150	171	182
53	44	21	12	245	236	213	204	181	172	149	140	117	108	85	76
205	212	237	244	13	20	45	52	77	84	109	116	141	148	173	180
51	46	19	14	243	238	211	206	179	174	147	142	115	110	83	78
207	210	239	242	15	18	47	50	79	82	111	114	143	146	175	178
49	48	17	16	241	240	209	208	177	176	145	144	113	112	81	80
196	221	228	253	4	29	36	61	68	93	100	125	132	157	164	189
62	35	30	3	254	227	222	195	190	163	158	131	126	99	94	67
194	223	226	255	2	31	34	63	66	95	98	127	130	159	162	191
64	33	32	1	256	225	224	193	192	161	160	129	128	97	96	65

FRANKLIN'S 16 x 16 SQUARE

I'll warrant that in your analysis you'll go over and over that penultimate sentence until you begin to question your sanity. And when you reach the necessary, unavoidable and satisfying answer you will feel a sense of exhilaration that no breviary of hokum can ever confer.

Another literary problem, with less verisimilitude I fear, is the one Mr. Phillips calls *Six Authors In Search of a Character.* The chief improbability of course is that the authors were all travelling first class. You will imagine, of course, an English railway compartment, with two settees facing each other. Draw a little plan and it's fairly easy:—

"Six authors are seated three a side in a first-class railway compartment. Their names are Black, Brown, Gray, Green, Pink, and White. They are (but not respectively) an essayist, an historian, a humorist, a novelist, a playwright, and a poet.

"Each has written a book which some other occupant of the compartment is reading.

"Mr. Black is reading essays. Mr. Gray is reading a book by the author sitting opposite to him. Mr. Brown is sitting between the essayist and the humorist. Mr. Pink is sitting next to the playwright. The essayist is facing the historian. Mr. Green is reading plays. Mr. Brown is the novelist's brother-in-law. Mr. Black, who is in a corner seat, has no interest in history. Mr. Green is facing the novelist. Mr. Pink is reading a book by the humorist. Mr. White never reads poetry.

"Identify each of the six authors."

There are plenty other kinds of problems in Mr. Phillips's wallet—murder mysteries, cryptograms, word and number squares—but in one evening's pastime I admit I hunted mostly for puzzles with a literary tinge. Of a mild sort, what is better fun than this:—

"Mrs. Scribbler's daughters were not very successful in their attempts to identify the portraits of famous poets. Mrs. Scribbler had put five portraits on the mantelpiece—those of Browning, Byron, Keats, Shelley, and Tennyson—and she invited each girl to write down the names of two of them. These were their answers:

Mabel: No. 2 is Byron. No. 3 Tennyson.
Gertie: No. 1, Browning. No. 2, Shelley.

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Diana: No. 3 is Shelley. No. 5 is Browning.

Puss: No. 2 is Byron and No. 4 is Keats.

Sheila: No. 4, Keats. No. 1, Tennyson.

Each girl gave one correct and one incorrect answer.

What number did Mrs. Scribbler assign to each poet?"

He also retells some admirable old favorites which we have all heard in one form or another but which have given innocent pleasure for generations. For example, the story of Big Indian and Little Indian. Little Indian was the son of Big Indian, but Big Indian was not the father of Little Indian. Simple, isn't it—yet it often fools people. Then there is the classic, almost too familiar to repeat (but it's only by repetition that things get to be classics):—

"A friend told me the following story:

'The squire,' she said, 'died suddenly the other day. He and his wife went to church, and the day was very hot. The squire fell asleep. He dreamed he was a French nobleman at the time of the Revolution. He had been condemned to be guillotined, and was waiting on the scaffold for the guillotine to fall.

'Just then his wife, noticing he was asleep, tapped him on the back of his neck with her fan. The shock was so great—in conjunction with his dream—that the squire immediately died.'

I said: 'That story, on the face of it, is not true.'

Why?"

I've borrowed more from Mr. Phillips than is usual or mannerly, but I don't know any other way to suggest how delightful his book is. He will forgive much to an old friend, and I've taken liberties with him before. In a little story called *Kathleen,* written now nearly twenty years ago, you'll find him masquerading under the name of Forbes, and even there, I recall, he was described as having a "playful" mind. His book is published in the U. S. by David McKay. (I'll print the answers next week.)

And to conclude a ratiocinative evening, what should I chance upon but that exciting quarterly, far over my head, *Scripta Mathematica.* In its issue of last spring, Claude Bragdon reproduced Ben Franklin's 16 x 16 Magic Square, whose properties are remarkable enough to end all Magic Squares in this department. Mr. Bragdon also illustrated the extraordinary design which is developed by tracing the numbers in their natural order. (It may be found in his book *Frozen Fountains.*) In the square itself:—

> The sum of the 16 numbers in any row or column is 2056. The sum of the numbers in half of any row or column is 1028 or ½ of 2056. The sum of the numbers in two half-diagonals is 2056. The sum of the four corner numbers and the four central numbers is 1028. The sum of the numbers in any sixteen cells which are disposed in square form is 2056.

Pushkin: 1799-1837

PUSHKIN. By Ernest J. Simmons. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1937. $4.

Reviewed by WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

ON 24 September 1911 I stood in front of the statue of Pushkin in Moscow, and thought of that memorable day, 8 June 1880, when Turgeniev and Dostoievsky spoke in his honor. The latter's speech produced an indescribably emotional effect, men and women weeping hysterically and cheering and shouting in almost insane enthusiasm. And the speech became a classic in Russian literature, in a way comparable to the orations of Demosthenes, Cicero, and Daniel Webster. The occasion was marred only by the absence of Tolstoy, who refused to attend; had he been there, the three greatest Russian novelists would in person have done homage to Russia's greatest poet.

There were two reasons why Tolstoy would not come; one was his curious lack of appreciation of other men of genius, and the other his belief that a man whose private life was immoral ought not to receive public homage. A regrettable result of his refusal was that it prevented Dostoievsky and Tolstoy from ever meeting. Turgeniev had travelled from Paris to attend the Pushkin celebration, had visited Tolstoy in his country home and pleaded with him in vain. Then, when Dostoievsky wrote to Turgeniev and asked if he himself could do any good by calling on Tolstoy, Turgeniev replied sadly that it would be no use. Thus Dostoievsky and Tolstoy never met.

Pushkin was killed in a duel in 1837, for which he himself was chiefly responsible. The man who killed him lived until 1895, which makes us wonder what additional works of genius the poet might have composed in the forty or more years he should have had. But he was ill, unhappy, overwhelmed with debts; death was perhaps his only means of escape.

Dr. Simmons in this excellent biography has succeeded in his attempt to give accurately and impartially the story of Pushkin's public and private life. Its style, to be sure, is undistinguished, partly owing to the objectivity of the book, partly to the author's modesty. There is a complete self-effacement; Dr. Simmons keeps the light steadily on his hero and makes no attempt at that Jack Hornerism so characteristic of the art of biography since the appearance of "Eminent Victorians." I can easily imagine how sensationally many of our modern biographers would have treated such inviting material. But I think the restraint shown here increases our respect for the biographer's accuracy and actually adds to the excitement of the prolonged final tragedy.

Pushkin took no real interest in politics; in his heart he sympathized with the Decembrists but he did "not resist unto blood," having no relish for martyrdom. If this subtracts from his courage, it was a fortunate thing for literature. Pushkin was an artist, a poet, a novelist, a man of letters; he was as serious about his art as Mozart was about music. And the glory of his poetry lies exactly where Housman said it ought to lie, in the arrangement of words; one can feel this even in translation. Had Matthew Arnold seen this translation, he would not have made that appalling statement, "The Russians have not yet had a great poet." Arnold told Sainte-Beuve he did not think Lamartine was "important," to which the Frenchman replied, "He is important for us." Yet Arnold's essay on Tolstoy was one of the ablest and most penetrating criticisms that had then appeared.

Although Pushkin's greatness is more resplendent in poetry than in prose, I think it was his prose tales that had the greater germinal effect on Russian literature. Gogol, Turgeniev, Tolstoy, Dostoievsky, all followed the leader. His stories are by no means interesting only from the historical point of view; they are consumedly exciting, and O. Henry often imitated them even if he did not know it. The thrilling story "The Queen of Spades" which I first read many years ago in Prosper Mérimée's impeccable translation, will startle the most sophisticated metropolitan citizen one hundred years after the death of its author.

I have been waiting forty years for this biography; Dr. Simmons has written not only a valuable, but an indispensable book. It is well equipped with notes, bibliography, and index.

The thirteen illustrations are noteworthy; and the Negro blood in Pushkin is shown most strikingly in the portrait of him in his schooldays. Any one who saw that without knowing who it was would believe it to be a full-blooded Negro. Yet the mature portraits, like the fine one in the frontispiece, show hardly a trace of African descent. We are clearly shown Pushkin's growth and development as a poet and prose writer; how, with all his similarities to Byron in conduct and in art, he was through and through Russian; the germinal qualities of his poems and stories; how far the Negro element affected his genius and his character; why he is still Russia's greatest poet and most beloved writer.

William Lyon Phelps had a large part in introducing Russian Literature to the American public. His "Essays on Russian Literature" deal enthusiastically with leading Russian writers.

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Russia's First Realist

(*Continued from page 4*)

Nicholas, who threatened to wash his hands of the ungrateful poet, the pleadings of Karamzin and Zhukovsky that it would be his ruin, and the reluctance of his wife to leave the capital compelled Pushkin to withdraw his resignation. He remained a chamberlain until he was killed at the age of thirty-seven in a duel. But he was not, as uninformed people assume, a happy or subservient courtier.

This, however, is only the political, unhappy side of Pushkin's life following his return from exile. Literary and intellectual Russia received him as the prince of writers and he rewarded their admiration by reading to them from the verse he had written at Mikhailovsk. The impression of these readings is recorded in numerous letters and diaries. One of these notations by the writer, Pogodin, gives us a vivid idea of Pushkin's place in Russian literature. It refers to the poet's reading, in 1826, from his historic tragedy, "Boris Godunov."

> It is impossible to convey the effect this reading had upon us. We were brought up on Lomonosov, Derzhavin, Cheraskov, Czerov, all of them we knew by heart, and now we were gathered to hear Pushkin. It is necessary to recall the prevalent manner in which verse was read at that time. It was sung, declaimed in the French fashion. Finally one must visualize the personality of Pushkin himself. We were awaiting the highest priest of a great art, and here he was, of medium height, almost short, energetic, with long hair curled at the ends, completely unpretentious, with lively, piercing eyes, with a quiet, pleasant voice, in a black frockcoat, a black vest buttoned to the very top, and a carelessly tied cravat. Instead of the bombastic language of the gods we heard plain, clear, ordinary and, at the same time, poetic, and fascinating speech.
>
> The first verses were listened to quietly, peacefully, or rather with a certain amount of bewilderment. But as he continued the impression became stronger. The scene between the Chronicler and Gregory (the Pretender Demetrius) had us all in a whirl. And when Pushkin got to Pimen's account of Ivan the Terrible's visit to the Kirilov Monastery and the chant of the monks, "Yes, the lord will send peace to his suffering and turbulent soul,"—we were all in a sort of semi-conscious exaltation, a state of chill and fever. Our hair stood on end. We had lost the power of self control. People jumped from their seats, some cried out aloud. . . .

Pushkin's own opinion of "Boris Godunov" was conveyed in a characteristic note to Prince Vyazemsky in October 1825. "My tragedy, 'Boris Godunov,' is finished. I read it aloud to myself, clapped my hands and shouted: 'Hey, hey, Pushkin; hey, hey, you clever devil.'" Pushkin was now the acknowledged "high priest" of Russian literature—at the age of twenty-six—but his complete triumph, the scaling of the highest peak, was not achieved until the publication of "Eugene Onegin" in 1831. The response to this "novel in verse" beggars description. The reading public saw in it an embodiment of all the gifts, clarity, simplicity, superb characterization, satire, realism, pathos, indomitable love. Literary Russia was amazed by this unsurpassed versatility.

Some have seen in Onegin the influence of Byron, and Pushkin himself is in a measure responsible for this superficial impression. In the first cantos of the poem he mentions "Childe Harold," and he likes to speak of "beef-steak," "dandy," and "spleen." But he employs the Byronic note merely as a good chef makes use of some rare seasoning, very sparingly, and in the first cantos only. Onegin is thoroughly Russian, and in fact an excellent likeness of his creator.

But whatever the reaction to the hero of the novel may be, the great, the towering figure is Tatiana. She is more than a literary creation. Her image is discernible in the wives of the Decembrists who abandoned their palatial homes and followed their revolutionist husbands to Siberia and a life of indescribable hardship. Tatiana became the symbol, if not the model, for the courageous, unselfish Russian women who later peopled the revolutionary movement. Their self-sacrifice, their uncompromising revolutionary ardor and love for the masses are history. We meet her lineal descendants in Turgeniev's novels, in Nekrasov's epic poems, in Tolstoy's Natasha of "War and Peace," in "Anna Karenina." Incidentally, Tolstoy's Anna is related to Tatiana even in a more direct line. According to Mme. Kouzminskaia, who was Tolstoy's much loved sister-in-law and the model for Natasha of "War and Peace," Pushkin's beautiful daughter whom Tolstoy met only once was the inspiration for Anna Karenina. Tatiana's offspring are superb women. But none of them, whether they be literary creations or living revolutionaries, is more intensely human than their great ancestress.

Turgeniev, who himself wrote fine verse and who is Pushkin's only rival in beauty of literary form and economy of expression, considered Pushkin the equal of the greatest poets of all time, and only Tolstoy his equal as a realist. To understand the real significance of Turgeniev's opinion one must recall that the first cantos of "Eugene Onegin," with their devastatingly satirical and realistic portrayal of St. Petersburg society, were written in 1822, when the author was twenty-three years of age. The entire span of life of this master realist was thirty-seven years.

Pushkin's realism, unlike Tolstoy's, is not dressed in authority. It has none of the doctrinaire, dictatorial philosophy of the great novelist. Pushkin's is the absolute realism of a free spirit who does not wish to impose anything upon anybody. He makes no demands. And yet the result is more than "pure" literary form or a conscious art. It is the spontaneous personal expression, often childlike in its sincerity and incomparable frankness—even among Russians—of a creative mind singularly human and resentful of every sham and exaggeration. He never made the little fishes talk like big whales, at a time when everybody's attention was focussed on the big whales and no one was aware of the existence of the little fishes. He was fastidious in language but it was the language of the people. Often he would spend weeks in finding the right word or phrase but his effort was always toward greater clarity and simplicity.

His preference for the plain speech of the Russian people was not an accident. He loved the Russian masses and liked to mingle with them, to the disapproval of his fellow aristocrats and the secret police. They considered it unseemly for Pushkin to dress like a peasant when in the country and to appear on market days and church festivals not with his equals but among the crowd, participating in the singing and engaging peasants in conversation. In 1836 at an art exhibition in St. Petersburg, he was being escorted by the director of the museum. He stopped before a statue of a barefoot boy playing at knuckle-bone and exclaimed, "God be praised, at last our sculptors have discovered the people!" His own discovery of the Russian people was vehemently resented by the classicists who were unable to forgive Pushkin, in the words of Kropotkin, "for expressing his thoughts in beautiful images without resorting to their kind of embellishments."

Pushkin's simplicity, however, and lack of embellishments have beguiled some critics into believing that he was lacking in depth. Alas, there are still unimaginative people, survivors of the obsolete Russian Intellectual, who cannot conceive anything intellectual that does not involve a headache. They persist in describing Pushkin as a great poet but a "shallow" thinker. Such opinions may come and go. But Russia feels, with Pushkin, as he proudly declares in his own epitaph: that he reared himself a monument which will endure so long as poetry, the love of freedom, and the Russian language endures.

Manya Gordon is a Russian by birth though she has long been a resident in this country. She has kept in intimate touch with Russian politics and literature.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 150)

ÆSCHYLUS—
"PROMETHEUS BOUND."

All, all I knew, whate'er his tongue,
In idle arrogance hath flung.
'Tis the world's way, the common lot,
Foe tortures foe and pities not.
. . . . . .
O sky that biddest speed along
Thy vault the common light divine,
Be witness of my wrong.

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The PHŒNIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE most important book of poetry for this instalment of "The Phoenix Nest" is, without question, the new collection, "On This Island," by *W. H. Auden*, published by Random House in their usual attractive fashion at a dollar and a half. Mr. Auden is the young poet of the highest potential in England today. His "Island" is, of course, England. Lately he has married Thomas Mann's daughter, Erika. He dedicates this book to her:

Since the external disorder, and extravagant lies,
The baroque frontiers, the surrealist police;
What can truth treasure, or heart bless,
But a narrow strictness?

I find Mr. Auden, in this new work, more intelligible than he has sometimes proved in the past. His work was always exciting and interesting, but it has seemed to me that the critical acclaim of it somewhat outran the actual performance, daring and original as were his feats, both ideological and technical. But Auden's verse has effloresced in great variety. In the present book he uses certain old metres and makes them his own, even the sestina and the favorite form of Robert Burns. His book, I should say, is a good deal concerned with the love between individuals perplexed and harried by love of mankind and the hope for a better social order so that it is snatched, as it were, amid perils and imminent treacheries. This poet employs assonance quite as often as rhyme. He chooses his similes and metaphors boldly from phenomena of the day. At his most boyish he becomes roughly colloquial: in speaking of "the wise man, full of humour To whom our misery's a rumour," for instance:

Ah, what a little squirt is there
When of your aren't-I-charming air
You stand denuded.
Behind your subtle sense of humour
You hide the boss's simple stuma,
Among the foes which we enumer
You are included.

This is, of course, journalistic diatribe rather than poetry in any sense, though I admire the curse that follows, upon "The invasion of the great malignant Cambridge ulcer," from which I gather that the intellectuals and liberals of that university are *anathema maranatha* to the poet.

Let fever sweat them till they tremble
Cramp rack their limbs till they resemble
Cartoons by Goya:
Their daughters sterile be in rut,
May cancer rot their herring gut,
The circular madness on them shut,
Or paranoia.

But this is to deal with the least important part of the book. The ballad denominated "VI" (in its order in the book) is a grim and sardonic achievement that remains in the mind. It is excellently done. There is a definite bite to XII, also, of which this is the last verse:

Let him not cease to praise
Then his spacious days;
Yes, and the success
Let him bless, let him bless:
Let him see in this
The profits larger
And the sins venal,
Lest he see as it is
The loss as major
And final, final.

The musing at night from the window of the school in which the poet is teaching (X), the "bones of war" speaking from the turf in XVII, the irregular sonnet XX, the song "Under the abject willow," the very modern love poem in XV,—these are some of the notable things in the volume. Mr. Auden writes out of the terror and tumult, disillusionment and anger, of his own day. He is profoundly concerned about the state of the world. But he has other virtues also. Though, in spite of its merit, he seems to owe something of XXIV to William Butler Yeats, the two love poems on the facing pages 60 and 61 seem to me of rare quality, the one about the dream being most original and faultlessly direct. It should stand, I think, for a long time.

Tennyson once described the Poet (capitalized) as being "dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love." That sounds rather bombastic today, but hate and scorn and love are all mixed in Mr. Auden's poetry and give it good tough fibre. There is much beauty of cadence also, and beauty of language that does not "go soft." Altogether this new collection of poems will repay several readings.

"The Deer Come Down," by *Edward Weismiller* (Yale University Press), is the latest volume in the Yale Series of Younger Poets. Unobtrusive but genuine in every fibre, it is an excellent first book. Here is an undergraduate from Wisconsin writing about Vermont where he spent some years on a farm southwest of Brattleboro. The recalling of grass in midwinter, the simple portrait of a frog, several delightful and sensitive poems about deer, and an original use of words throughout, confirm his quality. We must add him to the youngsters who seem to be mustering so fast in this country with perceptive eyes and well-attuned ears. I have room only to quote the following simplicity:

THICKET

You who have heard the thrush, and seen the partridge
Gliding smoothly under a gray-white sky:
The sweetest song has never come from the forest,
Nor the softest wing gone by.

You who have reached the hemlock woods, and beeches,
And seen the fallen tree and the black slate ledge:
There is more darkness still within the thicket
Than ever came to the edge.

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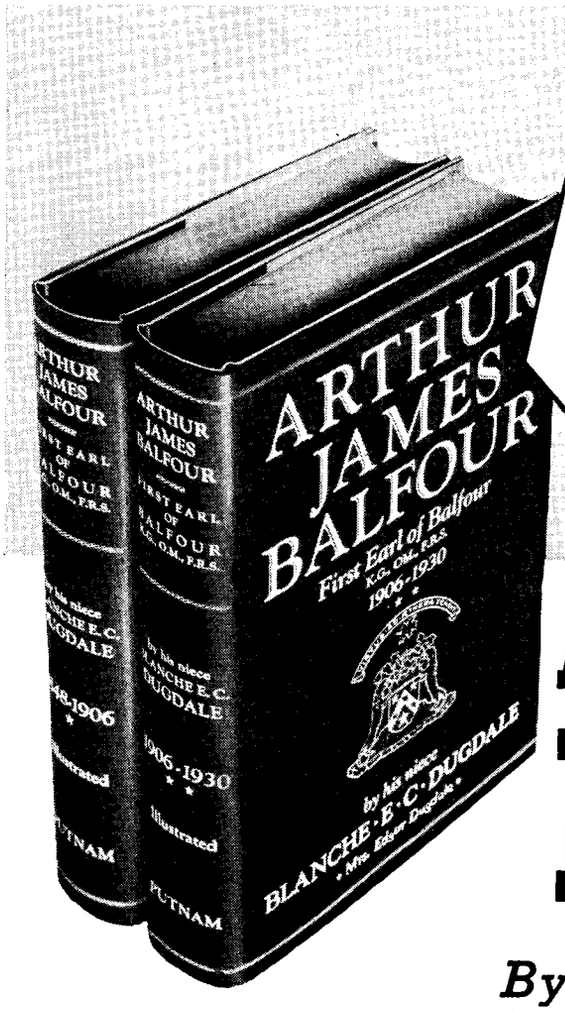

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Again, Mrs. Dugdale reveals that Balfour played miserable bridge . . . always had a volume of Edgar Wallace or P. G. Wodehouse at his bedside . . . had a violent aversion to tapioca pudding . . . would never read a novel unless assured it had a happy ending.

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RICKETY

B-L-F-R (Cabinet Maker): "There! It looks lovely!—I only hope it'll hold together!"

(October 7th, 1903)

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Art of the Night

BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

HELEN JEROME'S dramatization of "Jane Eyre," available in book form and currently on a preliminary theatrical tour, is in the main probably as satisfactory a job as might be managed, but one wonders why it was undertaken at all. There can be only one explanation, and there could be only one extenuation. The success, last year, of Mrs. Jerome's dramatization of "Pride and Prejudice" doubtless led her into the belief that if there were theatrical audiences for the rococo sentiment of Jane Austen there should be equally sizeable audiences for the rococo melodrama of Charlotte Brontë; that is the way the human mind, once it has tasted a lucky stage hit, often operates. So much for the possible explanation. As for any extenuation on the part of criticism, the play would be theatrically justified only if it were to be offered very frankly to present-day audiences as a burlesque melodrama and displayed preferably either in a revival of Mr. Morley's Hoboken Schauspielhaus or at the American Music Hall in Manhattan. When the Theatre Guild asks us to accept it with a straight face, as sober drama, we may be pardoned for tossing pennies at the stage.

As a play in the modern theatre "Jane Eyre" is impossible of serious acceptance. Even as a curio, interest in it evaporates after the first act, and the only way that that interest might be prolonged would be to act out its Laura Jean Libbey flavors for all they are ludicrously worth and then, in addition, incorporate into the evening several good beer-garden numbers between the acts. Consider being expected to accept for two hours with gravity, and without consoling seidels of lager and maybe two or three dozen pretzels, to say nothing of some large curled Hofbräu radishes, such speeches as Rochester's

> Why am I in the vicinity of this great house, with its brilliant casements, its ivy-covered battlements, its old ancestral trees, its smoothly shaven lawn?

and as Jane's (relative to a cormorant)

> All that drenching drags its wings down, so that it can't fly. That is like life, Adele. So many things drag at our wings—so many wings are trailing on the ground. But there, poor child, you don't know at all what I am talking about!

Meditate the problem of spending an evening, with no German brass band and several yodelers to enliven an olio, listening to such delicatessen as

> My dear, you are so young and so little acquainted with men. . . . I want to put you on your guard. . . . I am sometimes uneasy at the way he makes a sort of pet of you . . . just a while ago, for instance; the way he likes to draw you out.

and as

> I can understand murder. When I was a child I could have killed that man with these two hands [*Jane holds them out, whereupon Rochester in a strangled voice*] They are very small [*looks at them and looks away at once*].

Much too much water, heavily mixed with Scotch, has passed under the theatrical bridge since dear Charlotte's time for such stuff to evoke anything but impolite laughter. In the library, the novel may possibly retain some measure of sentimental, nostalgic appeal, though hardly for anyone with literary tastes above those of a defective maiden aunt or a curator of one of the pre-war White Star steamship reading rooms, but in the theatre any dramatization of it must demand, for its acceptance, free permission to the audience to pleasure itself with loud villain-hissings, hi-there-cutie, and me-for-you tributes to the sweet heroine, and lots and lots and lots of peanuts.

Mrs. Jerome, as I have intimated, has been quite faithful to the spirit of the novel and it is not her fault, though it may be a reflection on her critical insight, that the spirit of the modern theatre is considerably less faithful to such things. Through the casting of a popular moving picture actress in the leading role, the play may do some box-office business, but even with popular moving picture actresses and actors in every one of its roles it would still, for all the trade it might do, be a waif from Hoboken. Every other line of its dialogue is good for a boozy laugh. Jane, in her stage reincarnation, redescribed by the dramatizer, who habitually seems to fall in love with her own heroines, as "indescribably gentle," "the sort of twice-born soul that even the most uninitiated invariably glances at with a puzzled eye after the first overlooking," and so on—this stage Jane seems little more than the ingénue of old 10-20-30 melodrama elaborately temporizing until the third act and the big scene in which the hero in the décolleté chemise will snatch her from the tracks in the nick of time and rescue her from the onrushing express train. And Rochester—"an arresting figure in his riding cloak, tall, dark-eyed, black-haired, stern-browed . . . his horizontal sweep of black hair makes him look more Latin than English, but his decisive jaw and a good square athletic figure deny it"—who glances at Jane "with the appraising look of the intellectual epicure beginning to sense a novel and piquant dish" and who "nods to himself as a connoisseur would who has found a gem"—this Rochester is one to make even Régisseur Krimsky of the American Music Hall scratch his head a little fearfully and wonder if, burlesque or no burlesque, he could get away with it.

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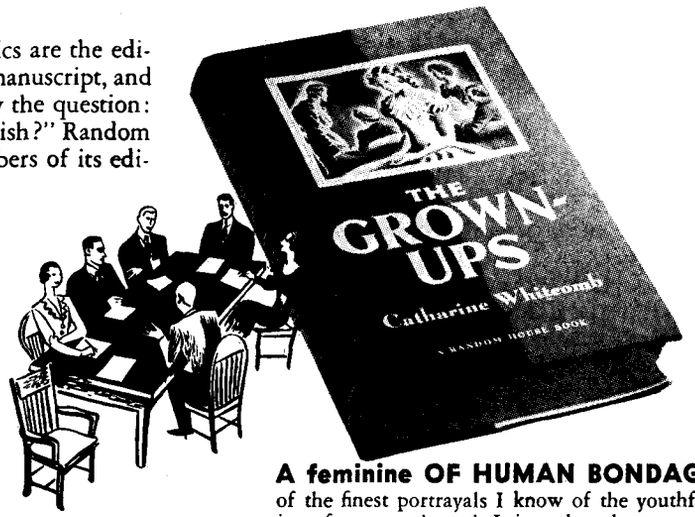
Join us at the editorial meeting which decided the fate of *THE GROWN-UPS*, by Catharine Whitcomb

A BOOK'S severest critics are the editors who first see its manuscript, and who must answer correctly the question: "To publish, or not to publish?" Random House has asked the members of its editorial staff to tell you in their own way why they voted unanimously to publish THE GROWN-UPS, a new novel by the author of *I'll Mourn You Later*



It had to be written: "The experience of growing up is struggle enough for any sensitive girl, even in a happy home. Take that home away from her, expose her to the wrangling and bickering of divorced parents who have chosen new mates, shunt her from relative to relative, let her learn her morals from the hired help, finally thrust her into that form of ice-box called a 'select female seminary'—then her story becomes an engrossing novel which uncovers the deep-rooted selfishness of parents and most other adults.

"From a literary standpoint, THE GROWN-UPS is proof enough to me that the author of *I'll Mourn You Later* has *arrived*. It sounds to me like a story very close to personal experience. I think she *had* to tell it, and I think we'll be smart to print it for the thousands of men and women who ought to read it as well as for those who are going to read it anyway."

Will galvanize adults: "The story of how Camilla Madden managed to grow up to young womanhood a wise and lovely person, *despite her parents*, is one that will galvanize many adults into new channels of thought about themselves and their children."

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THE GROWN-UPS

By Catharine Whitcomb

author of I'LL MOURN YOU LATER

$2.50, RANDOM HOUSE PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

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My Dear Edmund Wilson

(*Continued from page 8*)

sis may be in the study of American history; those who are working with his sociology regard me, rightly, as a dabbler. But meanwhile, if you will not read what Pareto says himself, preferring to get him from me, I wish you would forget the piece I wrote in 1933 for *The Saturday Review,* which was one of my unfortunate attempts to annoy certain literary people, and would consult the piece I wrote for *Harper's* when I was alarmed by the solemnity with which the earlier one was received.)

In literature, my first concern is the individual. What interests me is primarily the human emotions and experiences that have only a secondary connection with social movements. You are free to call this a fault or a deficiency in me, but remember that my religion taught me the principles of man's imperfection and God's mercy. The human tragedy does not seem to me an economic tragedy. Human courage, cowardice, tenderness, cruelty, ecstasy, hope, and despair seem to me to go deeper than an economic analysis can follow them. The struggle for existence seems to me deadlier and more hopeless than its economic constituent. My absorption is men and women in relationships which are immediately human but are economic only at many removes or at infinity. The grief of human life, youth and age, love and marriage and the talk of friends, how men conduct themselves under sentence of defeat—these immediately, of themselves, not as economic phenomena, are the values I consult. The literature that most interests me is the literature of man's loneliness and hope, his entanglement with the world, his words and consolations, his dismay under the night sky. Here also I avoid absolutes: there are other literatures, and you may have them, but permit me to follow after the kind I prefer.

As for America, let us go slowly. Many men are confident that they can sum up a nation and a people in one manuscript page, but I must refuse to try. I have no formula to explain the American past or present, still less the future; I have no logically articulated system of conceptions that will make all clear. The fault I find with the literary is precisely that they have such formulas and systems, and there is no difficulty in showing that they are grotesquely false. I can, and will, tell you something about what, in part, we are, and something about how, in part, it has come about—how in three centuries American life has been differentiated from other ways of life in the western world. But these are complex things, far too complex for any system, and the most monstrous of all follies is to try to impose on them the pattern of our private wish. We must go tentatively, which is what literary systems do not do. We must be accurate, as they are not; we must make our descriptions exact, verify our conclusions, keep our ideas in continuous touch with experience and under the control of demonstrable fact. We must avoid certainty, unity, vision, and the loaded dice. Let who will devote himself to gaudy versions of America, past, present, or to come, that bubble up from hope, desire, or some splendid vision of an ideal end: my job is merely to expose all these as mirage and so bring the discussion back again to the world of experience. It is a humble job, but it is in the public interest.

In what I have studied and observed about America I make out, I think, some limited sequences of mutually dependent actions—here and there. They do not account for everything, they do not resolve chaos or dissipate mystery, but I think that they are, within their limits, trustworthy. Watch these columns, and from time to time you will see what they are. What you will not see is any claim of finality, any conclusive simplicity, any allegation that an induction is complete or that a series may be safely projected into the future. I will tell you a little but not much, and I will denounce everyone who I think tells more than may be verified. Meanwhile you are right in saying that I accuse American literature of the 1920's of, in varying degree but on the whole, misrepresenting American life. Why does that idea startle you? Everyone agrees that it was true of the 1830's, say, or the 1890's, when books also sold well—why suppose that it cannot be true of our own time? You are right also in saying that my sympathies are with the middle class. Your gospel tells you that it is decadent; my experience assures me that it is not, and my study of its history supports what I shall say about its energies from time to time. Your gospel also promises you, on the proved word of a logical demonstration, that the democratic forms are played out. But to a historian, to me, that is just one more prophecy, engraved on golden plates, that the world will end in 1843 or 1893 (do you want more visions of last things from my museum of exploded gospels?). So far as I can see, our native variety of conditioned chaos is continuing. You may prophesy, but I will not. I hear the voice of lamentation but it is past noon and no fire has come. Peradventure Marx sleepeth and must be awaked.

BERNARD DEVOTO.

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NO: D. J. Whitney, B. Sc., of the Religion and Science Assn., begins in the February 6th issue of

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Four Englishmen in Evening Clothes Jumped into a Lake for the Love of Her . . .

A COWBOY travelled ninety miles across the desert just to pick her a bouquet of daisies . . . Such gallantry towards a woman, even when she is the possessor of green eyes and flaming red hair, must be taken as a tribute to an uncommon personality. Such things did occur, however, and the woman was Elinor Glyn, author of "Three Weeks," one of the most famous best sellers ever published and considered so scandalous in its day that readers would have hesitated to appear with it in public. These incidents appear on pages 55 and 161 of Mrs. Glyn's autobiography, which was published under the title, *Romantic Adventure,* on January 21st of this year. Since then, Mrs. Glyn's book has enjoyed as varied a crop of critical notices as any published this season. For example:—

Katherine Woods wrote in part in *The New York Times Book Review:* "The story of her life makes interesting reading . . . If Elinor Glyn takes 'Three Weeks' too seriously, she is not perhaps—considering the novels reception and lasting notoriety—to be blamed. And one cannot read her autobiography without feeling in her a kind of genuine gallantry which she does not take seriously at all. Although the imperfections of this book are obvious, some of the author's very limitations of mind and outlook make for an actual accretion of strength in her chronicle . . . Her Hollywood adventures are exceedingly entertaining . . ." *In this connection, we would like to call your attention to Mrs. Glyn's adventure with Charlie Chaplin in Mexico which you will find on page 301 and to a brief incident recounted on page 307 which begins: "Charlie Chaplin, Marion Davies and myself all came upon a murderer in the act of killing a man outside the door of my suite at the Ambassador Hotel . . ."*

Isabel Paterson wrote in a two-column review in *The New York Herald Tribune "Books"* that this was a biography in which the author "Tells All . . . A most disarming naiveté is the dominant trait of her character." Mrs. Paterson continued that it would be easy to make fun of some of the author's "harmless absurdities" in her "candid narrative, but not quite fair." And how right Mrs. Paterson was. Nearly every man who reviewed this book, which, after all, was written for women, chose to make fun of it. Robert Van Gelder in his daily column in the *New York Times* said: "Elinor Glyn's autobiography is even more curious than might have been expected, and as interesting . . ." Lewis Gannett, Sterling North and Harry Hansen expressed the same point of view.

Women reviewers, on the other hand, praised it and emphasized its strong feminine appeal. (It's just the sort of book that women delight in—and that men cannot seem to understand). And, whether the critics liked it or not they all devoted an amazing amount of space to their reviews (for which we thank them). *The Kansas City Star* devoted two columns to its review, retelling the story of Mrs. Glyn's life and remarking somewhat in the same vein: "The dominant impression is of a museum piece, miraculously animated after being hidden somewhere for fifteen years."

Time, as usual, made little editorial comment, but here is its neat condensation of a classic bit: "Part of the honeymoon was spent at Brighton, where, with a 'princely gesture,' Bridegroom Clayton rented the public swimming baths for two days for their private use, so that he and his bride might swim there naked."

REVIEWING THE CRITICS

• *Number 1* •

Few general readers have the time or the opportunity to consider the opinions of more than two or three of the critics on any particular book, and yet a publisher is frequently faced with a controversial press. He has offered a book to the public believing it to be of unusual interest and he cannot help wishing that prospective readers might consider such a press in its entirety. One solution may be to present, from time to time, a digest such as readers of "The Saturday Review" will find on this page. We hope these revaluations will have a minimum of personal bias.

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The New York Sun found the book interesting: "Apart from 'Three Weeks,' Mrs. Glyn has a story to tell . . . like Becky Sharp she early determined that she would never stay where she was, or be content with an uneventful life. Her native Jersey, France, England, and eventually imperial Russia seem to have accepted her at her own valuation." Fanny Butcher of *The Chicago Tribune* also found the book "amusing, though probably not always in the sense in which its author intended it to be." She was careful to point out, however, that the author was an "outspoken woman" and that what Mrs. Glyn had to say about American women in general would "make a good many wince." Miss Butcher added parenthetically, "She hands a few good rabbit punches at the vitals of some individual glittering American hostesses of the plush horse period." *Was Miss Butcher referring to the "blue satin bows" decorating "the most humble porcelain accessories" in the home of Mrs. Frederick Vanderbilt, mentioned on page 142?*

A *United Press* News Feature story described *Romantic Adventure* as "a grand book for laughs" using the following illustration: "There is genuine and uproarious amusement in Elinor's account of the sweet old ranchman (with lots of money) who loved her in vain and clutched one of her slippers to his manly chest in broken-hearted sorrow when she rejected him." *We might add that on page 196 there is an equally amusing account of a wild ride with a Russian nobleman in a* troika *during a raging blizzard.*

The Boston Transcript gave Mrs. Glyn, on the whole, a favorable reception and, ranging further afield, *The Akron Beacon Journal* found the book "surprising, interesting, lively, and revealing"; and added, in contrast to *The Chicago Tribune,* "The author's perceptions are keen and if they are often naive, it is a charming naiveté, that is perhaps not completely unconscious." *The Macon Telegraph* found the book "a fascinating picture of times and people."

This gives you a fair cross-section of the reviews. A number of critics chose to mention the same story of the four young Englishmen who jumped into a lake while quarreling over their love for Mrs. Glyn, and avoided consequent chills by bathing in champagne; but few, if any, mentioned the author's remarkably intuitive contemporary sketches of the signers of the Treaty of Versailles, or the chapters on her work during the War. And, it apparently occurred to no one that sometimes when she seems absurd, she has her tongue in cheek. But, the most surprising comment of all came from *Transradio News Features* in a broadcast entitled "Women in the News" which announced *Mrs. Glyn* as the author of *The Sheik!* Such is fame—

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"Its charm is in its genuineness and in the resolute and resourceful character of the author."—*Philadelphia Inquirer.*

"The vitality of the author, her hunger for life, capture the reader's interest."—*Paul Jordan-Smith in the Los Angeles Times.*

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The New Books

Belles Lettres

THE METAPHYSICAL POETS, A STUDY IN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE. By Helen C. White. Macmillan. 1936. $3.

Miss White's book combines useful biographical and critical accounts of Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, and Traherne, with adequate and often skillfully revealing general chapters on the character, intellectual and religious, of the times in which they wrote. Little of the material is new, and few of the critical estimates go beyond those already current, but in a few paragraphs Miss White does light up her subject with flashes of shrewd insight, and often, especially in her discussion of the "background," brings together and relates familiar facts so as to give them new relevance and effect. Her book opens with a long introduction on "Mysticism and Poetry," and apparently there is an effort to give unity to the examinations of the markedly different individuals she treats by relating the comment to their qualities as "mystical poets." Unfortunately her definition of mysticism is too vague to be of much assistance in analysis, and her introduction and her comments on the mysticism of various writers might be left unread without seriously damaging what is valuable in her criticism. She inclines, probably, to see the whole period in too rosy a light, and to minimize its skepticism, its ironies, and its growing cynicism, thereby blurring the dramatic force of some of its poetry. Similarly, in writing of Crashaw, she gives less attention than may be necessary for full understanding to the possible uglier implications of some of his imagery.

None the less, Miss White's book is the longest, and presumably the most generally helpful of the several recent summary studies of the chief metaphysical poets, save, perhaps, for Williamson's "The Donne Tradition," which, curiously, she does not cite. That book excels hers, in that its critical judgments are usually presented in immediate relation to close analysis of the poems themselves. Too often Miss White's remarks on specific poets lack hardness and edge because they are too general and too infrequently pinned down to the letter of the text.

K. B. M.

THE WORKS OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN. Lyrics, Narratives, Poems, Folk Tales, Plays, Prose. Selected and Edited, with an Introduction by Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Random House. 1936. $3.50.

Mr. Yarmolinsky deserves a vote of thanks for his efforts to arouse interest in Russian literature in the United States. His Turgeniev and Dostoievsky are scholarly biographies. In this edition of Pushkin, however, he is unsuccessful.

To translate Pushkin's verse is a gigantic task. It is not only necessary to be a great poet, but to possess an unaffected, imaginative simplicity of soul, and be able to forget one's ego. It is necessary to love Pushkin and abandon oneself entirely to him, and not to say, "See what a line I have written," or merely produce a rhyme. Verse that has the folk simplicity of Pushkin's is either superbly grand as in the original, or ordinary and trite as Miss Deutsch has made it. The result is a Pushkin that makes one wonder why these Russians make so much to do about him. Well, the answer is that this is not Pushkin.

Mr. Yarmolinsky is apparently unacquainted with the vast amount of new material about Pushkin's life which Soviet Russia has discovered in the Archives and his introductory sketch suffers as a result of it.

M. G.

Fiction

LOW COMPANY. By Daniel Fuchs. Vanguard. 1937. $2.50.

Daniel Fuchs is still exploring the far reaches of darkest Williamsburg, and he is still sending in his reports of strange, stunted creatures that supposedly live there. They are lively reports, full of movement and gesticulation and grinning caricature, and sudden cries and bumps, like a comic strip. And, like the modern comic strip, these quaintly extravagant clowns have left off being merely helpless and funny, as they were in Mr. Fuchs's last book, and begin now to move about in deadly seriousness, to really kill each other and ruin themselves, all with the same ridiculous gestures and absence of human motivation. As a description of the uncontrollable flounderings of a group of cretins, this book may have truth in it, but as a cross-section of life in Coney Island (which it is apparently meant to be), it is absurd. The point about Mr. Fuchs's writing is that it has all the vigor and subtlety for any good job he might want to do. The wonder is that he doesn't set about doing it.

N. L. R.

THE FAITHFUL LOVERS. By J. D. Beresford. Lee Furman. 1937. $2.50.

Frank Swinnerton says that J. D. Beresford was listed as one of the bright boys and girls of the younger generation, around 1912, and bracketed with E. M. Forster as an intellectual. Since then he has written a great number of books. Literary fashion has changed during that time, but Mr. Beresford has not. The author was also an architect for a time and it is said to show in his work. Certainly this novel is "plotted" to the teeth.

Brian Davys, son of an indigent journalist, looking over a Cornish garden gate, stared into the eyes of Shirley Veheyne, daughter of a landed proprietor. They fell in love. Though Brian and Shirley met but a very few times during the ten years or so that followed their first encounter, despite separation and obstacles, their love for each other never faltered and each was certain of the unwavering love and devotion of the other. "They were set on a high hill, visible for twenty miles in any direction, but they

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were completely alone, there was no one near enough to witness the one deliberate kiss with which they now pledged their bodies as they had already pledged their spirits."

This quotation, indicative of the tone in which the book is written, is intended to warn off certain readers and to lure on others. Those who say modern novelists ought to be locked up, they're so macabre, etc., will find this just their cup of tea. People attuned to the literary fashions of 1937 might possibly be made ill by it. This no indictment of Mr. Beresford. There is absolutely no doubting his sincerity.

"What a relief to read about young people in these post-war days who do not seem to have heard of Freud," says the London *Sunday Times,* sonorously, of this novel. The analysis of character dates before Freud. Much Freudian analysis sounds silly in novels, but the absence of any character analysis may sound yet sillier. Ironically, one is often reminded of Freud in this novel in which the young people seem not to have heard of him.

C. H. M.

THE ISLAND OF GREEN MYRTLES. By Shirley Watkins. Macrae-Smith. 1937. $2.50.

This book deals with a subject as fascinating, as long existent, little comprehended, and complex as could easily be found: the delicate and egocentric male who would have his God and his woman too; the primary concern of whose life is the purity of his own soul, which must at intervals be washed in the blood either of the Lamb or of whatever unfortunate human being impinges at the wrong moment on his sex life.

The scene is laid in upper-class rural England, where, novels are wont to imply, the practical necessities of life are handled by unobtrusive servants and the social and sociological status quo is too agreeable to all concerned to encourage either ambition or questioning; with the result that any character who has an angel is free to wrestle with him day and night.

There are lines scattered through the book and in the closing paragraphs which suggest that the author may understand the complexities and the paradoxes involved more fully than the major portions of the book indicate. But the theme demands for adequate treatment a novelist of supreme imaginative and dramatic force, who has mastered his craft and who has assimilated all the slow knowledge man has yet evolved of himself. Beyond her preoccupation with the subject and her awareness that it is intricate, Miss Watkins reveals few qualifications for dealing with it. Her sentences flow smoothly and grammatically. There are frequent allusions which show a wide knowledge and love of the classics. But the more important parts of the story are told in almost outline form. The characters fail to come alive. The scenes are seldom vivid. She seems to lack the technical skill of the novelist, and to have none of the dramatic intensity necessary to force on the reader's consciousness the full import of the characters and their acts.

P. S.

History

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. By Sir Charles Oman. Dutton. 1937. $3.

This slight collection of essays on aspects of the sixteenth century is distinctly a minor work, a by-product of the serious researches of one of the most eminent of living historians. It is an informal record of impressions derived from four years of study of the art of war at the time, presented topically with the warning that there are more "ifs" than "therefores" in history, and that most generalizations are unsafe. Protected by this saving clause, the author accompanies his sketches of the transition from medieval to modern times with a running fire of *obiter dicta* in which he lets his own hobbies and temperamental bias have full sway. Along with the opinions one gets a little rudimentary economic and social history, more in the religious and intellectual fields, and some interesting light on the psychology of the age. About outstanding personalities Sir Charles is fuller and more entertaining, and the chapters on diplomatic and military history are capital, though too short. These essays are not intended as a history of the sixteenth century, and persons unfamiliar with the period should use them with caution. Those able to supply the connections omitted by the author, and at need to correct his emphasis, may be irritated but cannot fail to be interested by his genially unguarded pronouncements. The proofreading of this book has been inexcusably careless; there are some extraordinary errors in dates.

G. M.

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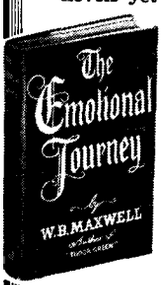

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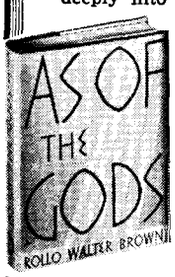

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

WE were sorry to hear of the death on February 3 of Mr. W. M. Meredith, long distinguished in the British publishing trade (a director of the famous firm of Constable's). He was the son of George Meredith. ☞Rereading the late William Bolitho's *Twelve Against the Gods* found a timely quote: "All the poets are on one side, and all the laws on the other; for laws are made by, and usually for, old men." ☞ Speaking of centennials, as somebody seems to be, it's a hundred years since E. P. Roe was born (1837-1888). We always were curious about those enormously popular books *Barriers Burned Away* and *He Fell In Love With His Wife.* Has anyone in the house read them? ☞Two friendly correspondents write to say that they always remember the date of St. Agnes' Eve. One of these published a poem about it in the Kansas City *Star* on the date itself:—

ON JANUARY TWENTIETH.

Saint Agnes Eve—so I am reading Keats,
Despairing, yet rejoicing, at each line—
Rejoicing most, as this glad thought repeats:
I read his verse—he never can read mine!

DOROTHY BROWN THOMPSON.

☞Wednesday, Feb. 17, at the Aldine Club, the annual dinner and dance of the N. Y. Booksellers' League: speakers will be Marcia Davenport, Ishbel Ross, Ruth Adams Knight, Muriel Fuller, Kurt Steel, and James C. Wilson. Tickets ($2) from Theodore Schulte, 80 Fourth Avenue. ☞We have a mystery correspondent who sends us notes on Publisher's Boners. For instance in McBride's spring catalogue: "Burton's monumental translation of the *Arabian Knights,* one of the most astounding literary feats on record." ☞Astounding indeed, as also McBride's calling him "Sir Burton" instead of Sir Richard. ☞A useful little book, unique in its field is H. S. Boutell's *First Editions of Today and How to Tell Them* (Lippincott, $1.50). Book dealers and collectors have long been calling for a reissue of this handbook, which gives statements *from the publishers themselves* (both American and English) as to their practice in identifying first editions. The book is now ready in an enlarged revision by Roger Boutell, the father of the author.

☞Old Q. has been delighted with a lot of good thrillers lately. *The Obstinate Captain Samson* by Gavin Douglas (Putnam) continues in bravura vein—a little too much so for full credibility—the exploits of the tomato-faced British tramp-skipper. This is good for seafaring appetites; and there's a new Bulldog Drummond (Crime Club) which exactly meets our taste for chitterlings. A cold midnight, a can of mushroom soup, a sprawl by the hearth, and Bulldog Drummond, good medicine. ☞Among poetry we have a hunch about Ruth Pitter's *A Trophy of Arms* (Macmillan) but haven't seen it.

☞Are booksellers reading anything besides the Best Sellers? If so, why don't they tell us what.

☞Good news! how many times we've mumbled our grievance that it's so hard to find a copy of *Disenchanted* by C. E. Montague. Published just 15 years ago, it remains one of the finest books about the War—not in the details of campaigning but in godlike and compassionate purview. And now Peter Smith, publisher, 347 Fifth Avenue, N. Y., writes us that he keeps in stock the pocket edition (Phoenix Library) from Chatto & Windus in London. ☞"But just try to persuade the bookshops to stock it!" cries Peter dolefully. (It would be fun to surprise him.)

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
CARDS ON THE TABLE *Agatha Christie* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Host at London bridge party stabbed by one of four players, with H. Poirot and Inspector Battle of Scotland Yard near by.	Situation, detection, and characterization make this one of author's top notchers—although she nearly outsmarts herself at end.	Don't miss it
THE GHOST IT WAS *Richard Hull* (Putnam: $2.)	Legacy-hoping nephews plan psychical spoof on rich, wrathy and wraith-hunting uncle. Result; 2 murders and slick sleuthing.	Impersonal yarn, with Gothic atmosphere, occasional flashing wit, and sundry shivers—but little life and less conviction.	Take your chances
JUDGE PRIEST TURNS DETECTIVE *Irvin S. Cobb* (Bobbs-Merrill: $2.)	Several murders and a kidnapping cleared up by elderly but spry Kentuckian and colored retainer in two complete novelettes.	First case a well worked out puzzler; second not too good but atmosphere and dialogue erase all minor faults.	Very good, suh

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The Compleat Collector

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In alternate weeks this Department is devoted to Rare Books and is conducted by John T. Winterich

W. A. Dwiggins & Co.

THE TREASURE IN THE FOREST. By H. G. Wells. New York: Press of the Woolly Whale. 1936. *130 copies, 30 for sale.* $18.

THIS is an extraordinary little book, full of magic. The story of a buried treasure, and of how it was guarded, is just a flash of tropic sunlight and shadow, told simply—in itself of no importance. What gives it value is its use as a vehicle for Mr. Dwiggins's imaginative technique in decoration. He has always been intrigued by Wells, as witness his edition of "The Time Machine." Of him it might be said "From purest Wells . . . none deeper drank than he"—and how the author will enjoy the present handling of his simple tale. Enjoy it more, I think, than the librarian; for what is a cataloguer to make of a colophon page autographed with no less than seven names (Masassi, the "instigator" of the designs, Püterschein, emerging from retirement to mix the colors, E pluribus unum Dwiggins, Poilu and Balaena [?], Van the typesetter, and Cary the entrepreneur) and adorned with two monograms?

The precious ore of the book is in the six pictures, acknowledged to be by Mr. Dwiggins. In spontaneity—originality—freshness these decorations make most contemporary American work look as if it came out of the dust-bin. They have been stencilled in several colors, stencils and stencilling alike being by Mr. Dwiggins's own hand—and that hand belongs to a genius. It is a small book—only thirty pages—but it is a treasure in the bookshelf.

Miscellaneous

"Kipling in New England," by Harold Rice, has been reprinted by the Stephen Daye Press, Brattleboro, from the *New England Quarterly*. The story is worth telling and lacks only a reprint of "Pan in Vermont" to be complete ($1.50).

A delightful reprint of Andrew Lang's translation of "Aucassin and Nicolette" has been published by Holiday House in two editions, with designs by Maxwell Simpson and typography by Helen Gentry. The four-dollar edition on rag paper with the decorations hand-colored is especially desirable. One can only be pitied who does not know this story, and Lang's lovely ballad of Aucassin. This is the most charming edition since Mosher's.

The Columbiad Club of Connecticut will issue a facsimile volume of the first two specimen books of Binny & Ronaldson, the Philadelphia type foundry established in 1796.

"Battle in Greece," a newspaper story by Stephen Crane, has been printed in a limited edition by the Peter Pauper Press, with decorations by Valenti Angelo. If somewhat overdone in size—it is a short story—the workmanship is excellent, and Mr. Angelo's decorations, printed in color, add attractiveness to the page.

"What Laughing God?" poems by Whitelaw Saunders, has been printed by the Prairie Press, Muscatine, Iowa, handset by Carroll Coleman in "Centaur" type. It is a good piece of book making, which might have been helped by a little color in ink or binding.

Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" appears from the Powgen Press in an interesting format. (The first edition, by the way, in 1855, had what is probably the very worst title-page any American book ever had!) The long lines are broken up into short ones by the narrow columns, two to the page. The type is small and clear, as is the format. Line drawings by J. A. Low help the pages. A modest, attractive book.

The sixth Dent Memorial Lecture at Oxford was given by Richard de la Mare on "A Publisher on Book Production." From his experience with Faber & Faber, the author writes simply and well of the problems attending book production.

The Latin Press, D. Guido Morris, has been started at Langford, near Bristol, England, and announces an edition of Ecclesiastes, in the Latin of the Vulgate, at five shillings, and promises other moderate priced reprints.

The American Institute of Graphic Arts will open the current exhibition of the Fifty Books of 1937 by a meeting in the New York Public Library on Monday, February 15th at 8:15, for members and guests. Speakers will be Mrs. Beatrice Warde and Dr. Lehmann-Haupt. The fifty selections of the jury will be on exhibition at the Library beginning Tuesday, February 16, and will continue for a month.

Professor Otto Fuhrmann of New York University has made a linoleum engraving in colors of a conjectural portrait of John Gutenberg. The whiskers, derived from Thorwaldsen's Maintz statue, and beloved of all subsequent limners, have been omitted by Mr. Fuhrmann on excellent historical grounds, and the picture shows Gutenberg not as a benevolent old gentleman, but as an indomitable artisan.

Ampersand

DIGGINGS FROM MANY AMPERSANDHOGS. New York: The Typophiles. 1936.

This book is going to cause a lot of grief—in fact it already has! It was conceived by the indefatigable Paul Bennett, and sponsored by The Typophiles. Numerous persons were asked to contribute to the preparation of inserts which have now been bound up together into the chunky little volume. The only common feature, aside from page size, is the worship of the "ampersand," the short & of the printer's font.

There is a whimsical disquisition on the Amper stream where Gutenberg got his idea of printing, there are historic and imaginative ampersands without number, and there is some sound bibliographical information. Innumerable people have coöperated in this venture, and there is just where the collectors of the future are going to be baffled. For only 130 copies have been printed, mainly for distribution to the coöperators. There are a few copies of the book available for twenty-five dollars—and if one is a collector of Morley or Rogers or Ruzicka or Goudy, one must have this book.

The ideal place for the book is on the lamp-stand beside the guest room bed: its short chapters and shift of emphasis require no heavy head work—and there is a plot for a detective story in Mr. Dwiggins's map showing how Dr. Goudy caught the serif.

Pushkin

By Ernest J. Simmons

In this first full-length biography, in English, of the greatest poet of pre-revolutionary Russia, Mr. Simmons has presented a brilliant account of a stormy career. The reader follows with breathless interest the love intrigues that Pushkin summarized in his Don Juan list, his heartbreaking days in exile, his persecution by the tsar's secret police, the final duel forced upon him by the frivolousness of his beautiful wife, and the creation of his marvelous poetry, such as the world classics, *Eugene Onegin* and *Boris Godunov*.

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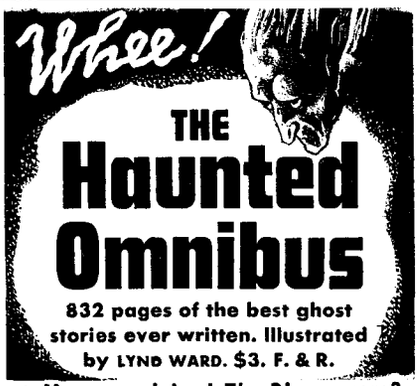

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LESLIE HOTSON, Haverford's boy-wonder literary-detective, after several free trips to England, declared in his "Shallow" book that "Merry Wives" was written in 1597. Dr. Cairncross, who did not leave his study, dismisses Hotson's notion and sets 1593. Hotson wrote in "Atlantic" that "Shake-speare" signed London documents; and refused to reply when shown that the signature was "Shakspe". Will he reply to Dr. Cairncross? George Frisbee

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC FANS

THIS is up to YOU!

***Do you want* letters in the squares? *Or don't you want* letters in the squares?** We put them in two weeks ago because so many of our readers asked us to. Many puzzle addicts have applauded this innovation. But now we are beginning to hear from the opposition—this sort of thing: "Must we have these letters added to the Crostics? They are horrible.—An Old Subscriber."

As far as the editors are concerned, we want to please the majority. We therefore announce that a plebiscite is hereby put in operation. Those interested are invited to write to the Double-Crostic Editor, Saturday Review of Literature, 25 W. 45 St., New York City. A postcard will do, merely saying "I'm for letters" or "I'm against letters." If you want to give your reasons, we shall be interested in hearing them.

All votes must be in our office by March 4, and the result will be announced in our issue of March 13. Unsigned votes will not be counted. (We have confidence that pseudonymous or double voting by our readers will be negligible.)

Double-Crostics: No. 151

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

■	■	■	■	■	■	1-Y	■	2-X	3-O	4-Q	5-F	6-L	7-G	8-P	9-J	■
10-V	11-Y	12-F	13-P	14-H	■	15-M	16-L	17-R	18-C	■	19-T	20-R	21-G	22-U	23-O	■
24-S	25-T	26-D	27-F	28-Z	29-C	■	30-X	31-O	32-I	33-P	34-U	35-Z	■	36-W	37-K	38-N
39-J	40-Z	41-D	■	42-Y	43-B	44-D	45-C	46-Z	47-Q	■	48-T	49-Z	50-D	51-N	■	52-W
53-O	54-C	55-B	56-Y	57-N	■	58-D	59-A	60-J	■	61-P	62-J	63-H	64-D	65-M	66-R	■
67-J	68-G	69-M	70-E	71-Z	■	72-E	73-J	74-A	■	75-Q	76-M	77-P	78-U	79-T	80-H	■
81-N	82-C	83-H	84-E	■	85-P	86-N	87-T	88-H	89-Y	90-F	91-R	■	92-L	93-O	94-A	95-G
96-Z	97-S	■	98-F	99-K	100-W	101-V	102-X	103-H	104-S	■	105-W	106-A	107-U	108-B	■	109-A
■	110-I	111-J	112-R	113-L	114-U	115-F	116-K	117-T	118-X	119-V	■	120-Q	121-J	■	122-F	123-O
124-L	125-P	126-K	127-I	128-C	129-M	130-Q	■	131-B	132-U	133-J	■	134-F	135-C	■	136-V	137-D
138-H	139-P	140-I	141-X	142-Q	143-E	144-U	■	145-C	146-F	■	147-A	148-W	149-E	150-S	151-M	152-C
153-N	154-H	■	155-Z	156-A	157-O	158-N	159-S	160-H	161-W	162-T	163-U	■	164-D	165-B	166-Q	■
167-C	168-E	169-F	170-J	171-Y	172-G	173-P	174-D	■	175-Y	176-X	177-B	178-D	■	■	■	■

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's International Dictionary.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 14 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. A lampooner.

B. Goddess of love and social joy (Egypt.).

C. Thoughtless, inconsiderate.

D. Composed with laborious effort.

E. Tschaikowsky's second name.

F. Light raillery.

G. Rough or stern of manner.

H. Not restricted.

I. Old Norse collection of heroic tales.

J. Embezzled.

K. Culmination.

L. Organ of the body.

M. Dormant.

N. Emphasizes.

O. Cannabis, chewed or smoked in the East.

P. Calm.

Q. Inhabiting an island.

R. Crazy (colloq.).

S. Virulent.

T. Lawful.

U. Deteriorating socially or esthetically.

V. Gape.

W. Endues; invests.

X. To speak to first.

Y. Reverberating.

Z. Idaho Falls.

WORDS

147 109 74 94 156 106 59

165 131 177 108 43 55

82 128 167 145 45 152 18 54 135 29

174 44 64 26 137 50 58 164 178 41

72 149 84 70 143 168

122 169 12 98 115 146 90 134 27 5

68 21 95 172 7

138 63 154 83 160 88 80 103 14

127 140 110 32

133 111 121 62 9 39 67 73 170 60

37 99 126 116

92 113 124 16 6

15 69 151 65 76 129

86 153 81 51 38 158 57

53 123 157 3 93 23 31

8 139 33 173 77 85 13 125 61

142 166 130 75 120 47 4

66 20 112 17 91

97 159 24 150 104

162 117 79 25 48 87 19

163 144 114 78 22 34 132 107

119 136 10 101

100 161 36 148 105 52

141 118 2 176 30 102

171 56 42 11 1 175 89

155 28 96 35 46 49 71 40

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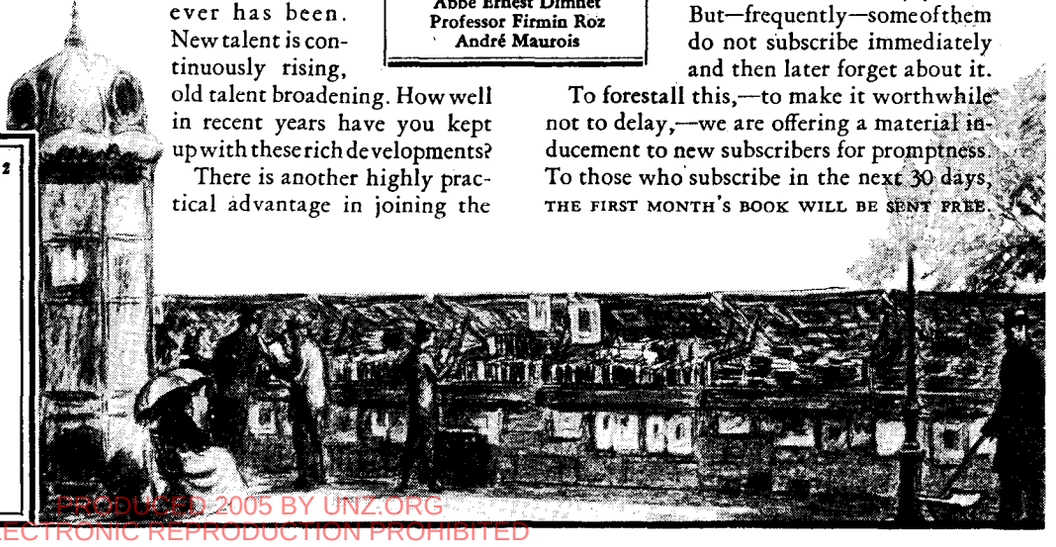

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